

For Immediate Release

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STATEMENT

St. Lucie County Chosen as Site of Seventh State Veterans' Nursing Home

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – St. Lucie County will host the site of the next state veterans' nursing home, following a unanimous vote in today's Cabinet Meeting at the Capitol.

The decision was made following a presentation on the site selection process by Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Executive Director Mike Prendergast.

The site in St. Lucie County was one of nine locations in six counties visited in June 2014 by a site selection committee composed of representatives from Florida's veteran community, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Florida Department of Management Services, which will oversee construction of the new 120-bed skilled nursing facility. The visits were publicly noticed and attended by local officials and members of the community.

Following public deliberation, the committee selected St. Lucie County as its top recommendation during a July 1 vote and forwarded the recommendation to the FDVA executive director for consideration.

Today's recommendation followed a months-long deliberative process, following Prendergast's Feb. 7, 2014 Cabinet Meeting presentation, which discussed the need for and formal process necessary to build additional veterans' nursing homes in Florida.

His presentation was based on an independent study authorized by the 2013 Florida Legislative Session and signed into law by the governor, which identified ten counties having the greatest need of a state veterans' nursing home. Six of the counties submitted formal proposals in May 2014 to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs for consideration.

“I greatly appreciate the time and due diligence each member of the site selection committee made in reviewing the individual proposals and inspecting the nine sites,” said Prendergast. “Their recommendation reflected a thoughtful and deliberative process which reflected a host of issues surrounding the suitability of the land offered by the six counties.”

The overall planning and construction of new veterans’ homes is a multi-year process dependent upon both federal and state matching funds.

“There are more than 700,000 veterans in the Sunshine State who are 65 years of age or older,” said Prendergast. “The need to build additional skilled nursing facilities has already been established and we look forward to building additional facilities in the coming years.”

The state’s network of existing veterans’ nursing homes has an occupancy rate averaging 99 percent. Florida currently has state veterans’ nursing homes in Daytona Beach, Land O’ Lakes, Panama City, Pembroke Pines, Port Charlotte and St. Augustine. The department also operates a veterans’ assisted living facility in Lake City.

The Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, serving the nation’s third largest veterans’ population, celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2014.

For more information on FDVA, visit www.FloridaVets.org.

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