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FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Treaties are signed and the battles of nations end, but the personal battles of those disabled in war only begin when the guns fall silent. These men and women must struggle to regain health, reshape lives shattered by disability, learn new trades or professions, and rejoin the civilian world. At each step, they need help to help themselves. For three quarters of a century now, that aid has come from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a nonprofit organization of more than one million veterans disabled during time of war or armed conflict.

Formed in 1920 and chartered by Congress in 1932, the million-member DAV is the official voice of America's service-connected disabled veterans -- a strong, insistent voice that represents all of America's 3 million disabled veterans, their families and survivors. Its nationwide network of services -- free of charge to all veterans and members of their families -- is totally supported by membership dues and charitable contributions from the American public.

THE DAV'S MEMBERSHIP

Some people simply assume that any veterans' organization with a little history behind it is a politically conservative group made up of older, male veterans. Emphatically, the DAV doesn't fit that stereotype. Membership is open to any honorably discharged veteran with a disability incurred in wartime military service or under conditions similar to war.

Veterans disabled during the Vietnam War make up a third of the DAV's membership, and 25 Vietnam veterans have served one-year terms as national commander, the DAV's highest office. Veterans

who served during Vietnam or later make up all of the DAV's management and professional staff at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as its offices nationwide.

The DAV is not a political association. Its members reflect all shades of American political opinion. They count on the DAV to advocate their needs as disabled veterans, and the DAV concentrates its attention and resources on this single, nonpartisan concern. Unlike some other veterans' groups, the DAV has no political action committee and does not endorse candidates for political office.

DAV programs and activities also enjoy the support of an Auxiliary that focuses its attention on disabled veterans' families. Auxiliary members are family members or survivors of those disabled or killed in wartime service. For more information on the Auxiliary, write to: DAV Auxiliary National Headquarters, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, Ky. 41076.

THE DAV'S HISTORY

When the troops came home from World War I, 300,000 carried grim reminders of war: disabling injuries, battle scars, gas-seared lungs, and prolonged illnesses. Following a tumultuous hero's welcome, America wiped the horror of war from its mind almost as quickly as the ticker tape was swept from the streets of New York City. The nation's makeshift response to the needs of its disabled heroes soon broke down. These angry young veterans took matters into their own hands, starting local self-help groups that soon merged to become the DAV.

After forming a national organization headquartered in Cincinnati in 1920, the DAV began planning a Washington, D.C., office to work toward needed legislation and expedite veterans' claims. During its first six months of operation in 1922, this office handled 7,000 claims for veterans across America. These young disabled vets also worked with other organizations, initiating legislation that led to a centralized government agency to handle all veterans' affairs: the Veterans' Bureau, forerunner of today's Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

In 1935, the DAV began stationing veterans' benefits experts in Veterans' Bureau claims offices and hospitals across the country. When the specter of World War II raised its head, the DAV upgraded its facilities and training programs to meet the new demands about to be placed on its service programs. As the first disabled vets returned from World War II, a formal program to train DAV National Service

Officers (NSOs) was started at American University. There, disabled vets studied the disciplines they'd need to help other returning veterans.

PARTNERSHIPS

HARLEY-DAVIDSON

The Harley-Davidson Foundation renewed a four-year grant of \$1 million through 2014 to support DAV's Mobile Service Office program, investing a total of \$2 million to support veterans since 2007. The special program, dubbed Harley's Heroes®, brings DAV's free professional assistance to veterans of all generations to Harley-Davidson dealerships. Since its inception, the program has sponsored MSO visits to more than 300 dealerships and has provided free benefits counseling to about 27,000 veterans.

HEARTLAND POKER TOUR

To salute the service men and women who have sacrificed in defense of American freedom, the Heartland Poker Tour has donated one percent of the tournament prize pool (where allowed by applicable gaming laws) to DAV since 2009, raising more than \$150,000. In addition to raising funds, HPT broadcasts a major television campaign to build awareness of DAV's mission and the multitude of issues facing injured and ill veterans.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

DAV's relationship with Ford can be traced back to 1922, when Henry Ford supported a caravan of 50 Model "T" Fords to help injured and ill World War I veterans attend the organization's second national convention.

The Ford Motor Company Fund has donated 156 vans for use in the DAV's nationwide Transportation Network since 1996. Those vans, along with others purchased by DAV, are on the road daily, taking sick and injured veterans to their Department of Veterans Affairs medical center appointments.

The fund also supports the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program that recognizes students who generously volunteer their time in service to veterans through our Voluntary Services Program. Since its inception in 2000, this program has provided more than 139 scholarships for compassionate young men and women.

Ford Motor Company is also a Host Sponsor of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

GOLDEN CORRAL

Military Appreciation Monday and the owners and staff of Golden Corral restaurants nationwide again exceeded \$1 million in donations to DAV Chapters and Departments in the event's 11th year. In addition to the \$1,035,665 the company and its owners have helped the DAV net in donations, more than 375,000 veterans were served free "thank-you" meals on Nov. 14. Golden Corral has served more than 3.2 million free thank-you meals to veterans while generating more than \$6.1 million to support grassroots advocacy and services for disabled veterans and their families. Golden Corral also offers outreach and support to the national organization through co-sponsorship of other events.

THE DAV'S NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

DAV is dedicated to the service of our nation's wounded heroes, the men and women who live with illnesses and injuries sustained during military service.

Some injuries are visible, and some, like post-traumatic stress disorder, are not. We are here to help them all, regardless of the severity or degree of the injuries.

Each year, DAV helps hundreds of thousands of veterans obtain government benefits earned through service. We provide much-needed help finding good jobs, a place to live and quality health care. We bring veterans struggling with physical, mental or emotional injuries together to share their experiences as part of the healing process. We are here to help veterans overcome great odds as they try to regain a sense of normalcy and take back their lives. In 100 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, we employ a corps of approximately 260 National Service Officers (NSOs) and 31 Transition Service Officers (TSOs) who counsel and represent veterans and their families with claims for benefits they deserve from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense and other government agencies.

Veterans need not be members to take advantage of our assistance, which is provided free of charge. With outlays of \$40,396,578 in 2011, these direct services make up the largest item in our budget for program activities. Between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, our NSOs and TSOs, all wartime veterans themselves, represented more than 215,000 veterans and their families in their claims for VA benefits.

NSOs function as attorneys-in-fact, assisting veterans and their families in filing claims for VA disability compensation, rehabilitation and education programs, pensions, death benefits, employment and training programs. They provide free information seminars, counseling and community outreach activities. Our Mobile Service Offices (MSOs) bring DAV services to veterans where they live. NSOs also represent veterans and active-duty military personnel before Discharge Review Boards, Boards for Correction of Military Records, Physical Evaluation Boards, the Disability Transition Assistance Program, the Transition Assistance Program, and many other official panels.

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING PROGRAMS

DAV National Service Officers continually train throughout their careers to keep current on changes in laws and regulations affecting veterans benefits. This constant training assures that all DAV NSOs are at the forefront of veterans advocacy. Our NSOs are highly trained professionals skilled in developing and pursuing veterans' claims through in-depth reviews of their service medical histories. They also review rating board decisions, informing veterans and their families of the appeals process and of their appellate rights.

The extensive preparation required for these essential services provided by NSOs begins with a 16-month on-the-job training program, which provides the foundation for new trainees. Trainees are instructed by tenured supervisory NSOs. The National Service staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters administers and monitors the program and the instructors.

An NSO's training does not stop after completing 16 months of initial training because the laws, regulations and policies which govern veterans' benefits continue to change and grow in complexity. That's why equipping our NSOs with state-of-the-art computers and keeping their cutting-edge advocacy skills up to date is of paramount importance. DAV is the only veterans service organization to have a training program certified for college credit by the American Council on Education. The goal is to produce the most highly trained representatives possible to serve veterans and their families.

NATIONAL APPEALS OFFICE

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is the highest appellate level within the VA responsible for final decisions concerning entitlement to veteran's benefits. About 96 percent of the claims before the board involve disability compensation issues. Our highly skilled National Appeals Officers serve appellants in the preparation of written briefs for BVA review and conduct formal hearings before Veterans Law Judges. We maintain the largest staff of any advocacy group, representing more than 30 percent of all cases decided by the BVA in 2011.

JUDICIAL APPEALS OFFICE

DAV continues its pro bono representation program for veterans seeking review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. In fiscal year 2010-11, the BVA took action on more than 14,000 cases involving DAV clients. Each and every one of those cases was reviewed to identify those in which a veteran's claim was improperly denied. Thanks to DAV, more than 600 of these cases were appealed to the court. While we are still working toward our goal of appealing each and every significant case, it is hard to believe that just a few years ago, we had yet to crack the 200-case per year mark.

TRANSITION SERVICE PROGRAM

Service members making the transition back to civilian life must overcome many obstacles, and we provide programs that address their overall health and well-being. DAV participates in Transition Assistance and Disabled Transition Assistance programs. Our TSOs provide benefits counseling and assistance to service members filing initial claims for VA benefits at more than 100 military installations throughout the country. By filing compensation claims at separation centers where service medical records and examination facilities are readily available, we are able to provide prompt service to these future veterans. During the last year, our TSOs conducted 3,974 formal presentations to 74,858 transitioning servicemembers. During that same time they filed 21,947 claims for VA benefits. Counsel and representation for active duty servicemembers during their transition was provided through the military's Disability Evaluation System. We devoted approximately \$1.7 million to this program in 2011.

MOBILE SERVICE OFFICE PROGRAM

The Mobile Service Office Program continues to reach out to veterans in their own communities. Not all veterans are willing or able to visit a DAV office due to distance, transportation, health or other reasons. By putting our service offices on the road, assisting veterans where they live, DAV is increasing their access to benefits. During 2011, our MSOs traveled more than 124,778 miles, visiting 811 cities and towns. Our NSOs interviewed 18,020 veterans and other potential claimants. The Harley-Davidson Foundation continues to partner with the DAV, to maintain the Harley's Heroes® program. During 2011, the MSOs visited 197 Harley-Davidson dealerships as part of this program. A little more than \$900,000 was spent on this program in 2011.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The National Service Department has the cooperation, support and assistance of Department and Chapter Service Officers across the country. Each receives the training and information necessary to assist those we serve. Our Department and Chapter Service Officer Certification Training Program guarantees the vitality and growth of our local service programs. This provides an environment where our Hospital Service Coordinators, Department and Chapter Service Officers and volunteers work together for the common goal of service to the men and women who served and sacrificed in our nation's defense. In 2011, DAV trained and certified 1,811 Department and Chapter Service Officers in 36 states.

During 2011, we conducted 28 Information Seminars at Chapters across the country, with 2,874 individuals in attendance. These Information Seminars provide the opportunity for veterans to discuss VA benefits with our NSOs in their own communities, giving Chapters an opportunity to recruit new members and encourage their involvement.

Since 2006, DAV NSOs have offered services at other community-based events, including participation with state and county fairs, air shows, Major League Baseball, the National Football League and NASCAR.

WOMEN VETERANS

In historic numbers, women are serving our country with pride and honor equal to their male counterparts. But women veterans use VA health care facilities and other earned benefits in lower numbers than their male counterparts. As a result, we advocate for women veterans on a variety of fronts. We have organized top-level forums designed to bring women veterans and government policymakers together to openly address topics of concern.

We are involved in the congressionally chartered VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. In addition, our own Women's Advisory Committee, primarily made up of women veterans from across the country, meets annually at our National Convention. We actively seek out and recruit women veterans for our NSO corps.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Our National Service Program is responsible for the organization's employment-related program and works alongside the Department of Labor, the VA, the Office of Personnel Management, Congress and other government agencies to ensure that disabled veterans are treated fairly and equitably in the work force.

Historically, disabled veterans have not fared as well as non-disabled veterans and other workers in the job market. Our primary goal is to seek legislation and policies to enhance programs and services provided by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, the Small Business Administration, the Office of Personnel Management and other government agencies. Our active involvement and oversight ensure disabled veterans get fair consideration in the job market.

HOMELESS VETERANS

Homelessness remains one of America's most complicated and important social issues. DAV helps homeless veterans by providing food and shelter, while connecting veterans to medical care, benefits counseling and job training.

DAV's Homeless Veterans Initiative seeks legislation and policies to enhance programs and services that help homeless veterans break the cycle of poverty and isolation and move from the streets to self-sufficiency. Our NSOs and Department and Chapter members have participated in Stand Downs for homeless veterans nationwide.

THE DAV'S NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

We are a strong and influential advocate for veterans' rights. We fight for veterans' rights on Capitol Hill, promoting policies which ensure veterans and their families can live with respect and dignity.

We are not politicians or backroom lobbyists. When our leaders testify before Congress, policy makers listen, not just because we've been around for 90 years, but because we are backed by our members—1.2 million veterans—a voice that policy makers cannot ignore.

Our advocacy progressed on multiple fronts during 2011, including the continuation of our Stand Up for Veterans grassroots initiative aimed at assisting our newest generation of veterans and the challenges specific to their rehabilitation and transition needs. Although many of our primary legislative goals related to that initiative were enacted into law during the previous Congress, it is equally important that we oversee the implementation of new laws for caregivers of disabled veterans, women veterans and post-deployment health and mental health issues for veterans with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. Further, with grassroots support, we continued to face down new initiatives that posed real threats to veterans benefits. Simultaneously, we pressed Congress to move forward on reforming the veterans' disability claims process.

One of DAV's primary legislative goals is to ensure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans health care. As part of a broader coalition of veterans organizations, DAV led the charge to pass historic legislation to reform how Congress funds veterans' health care programs. In response to intense pressure by our Legislative Department in Washington, D.C., and an activated grassroots network across the nation, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act in October 2009. Due to the commitment and dedication of DAV members, Congress is now required to approve funding one year in advance for VA medical services, medical support and medical facilities, which insulates it from the annual budget stalemates and government shutdown threats.

Although this historic law was a major step in the right direction, we must remain vigilant to ensure the VA and Congress fully implement and respect the advance appropriations law. Throughout 2011, DAV pressed Congress to ensure that the law was faithfully implemented, including the provisions requiring transparency and accountability for the VA's health care budget request. In particular, the law requires the VA to provide two-year budget estimates for health care programs, including specific explanations and rationales for those estimates. The law also requires the Government Accountability Office to examine and report on the VA's budget estimates and compare them to the department's internal actuarial model estimates as a way to prevent the use of budget gimmickry that can lead to funding shortfalls. DAV's legislative staff will continue to press Congress on this important issue to ensure that the VA's medical services programs have all the funds required to provide quality health care to veterans.

This legislative activity requires an intensive effort throughout the year, working directly with congressional members and their staffs and providing testimony to congressional committees on a variety of pertinent legislation considered by Congress. DAV plays an instrumental role in crafting and presenting the annual *Independent Budget* as Congress debates the president's budget and various appropriations bills that provide funding to support veterans programs.

The guiding principles of our public policy advocacy are set forth by the resolutions adopted by delegates to our annual National Convention and DAV's Constitution and Bylaws. Through our focused advocacy, DAV, as the primary voice to Congress of America's injured and ill wartime veterans, advances their interests and works for their betterment.

During the past year, DAV has been especially active in urging Congress to protect critically needed VA health care funding in the face of enormous deficit reduction pressures. As the country faces a difficult and uncertain fiscal future, the VA likewise faces significant funding challenges. Following months of rancorous debate about the national debt and federal deficit during the summer of 2011, Congress agreed on a deficit reduction measure which could lead to cuts in discretionary and mandatory spending for the VA. The law also created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction with the mission to reduce the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion during the next 10 years. Although the Joint Committee did not reach an agreement on how to make such cuts, DAV still has serious concerns about the potential for damaging reductions in VA funding. Significant changes to benefits programs and cuts to discretionary programs would be equally devastating for disabled veterans and their families.

Another key legislative priority for DAV during 2011 was pressing for and assisting the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) in reforming its benefits claims processing system. We have been working with the VBA for several years to encourage and help it transform an outdated, inefficient and inadequate claims processing system into a modern, automated, rules-based, paperless system. The VBA has struggled for decades to provide timely and accurate decisions on claims for veterans' benefits; however, despite repeated prior attempts to reform the system, the VBA has never been able to reach the

goals it has set for itself. Whether it can be successful this time depends to a large extent on whether it can complete a cultural shift away from focusing on speed and production to a business culture of quality and accuracy. DAV has and will continue to push the VBA toward creating a claims processing system designed to get each claim right the first time.

Just as we continued our efforts to ensure that funding is spent wisely by enhancing programs and services to meet the needs of injured and ill veterans today and far into the future, we will continue to work to ensure that the Administration and Congress fully meet our nation's obligations to all of the men and women who bear the physical and mental scars of their wartime service defending our freedoms.

In performing all of this work, no funds from charitable contributions are used to cover the expenses of our Legislative Program, with the exception of contributions donated explicitly to fund legislative efforts. All other legislative operations are funded from membership dues. During 2011, \$1.7 million was spent on legislative activities. While the costs of the Legislative Program are only about one percent of total expenditures, it is an essential part of our mission. The successes and ongoing efforts of this program demonstrate our dedication, strength and leadership in advocacy for the protection of veterans' rights and the benefits they deserve.

THE DAV'S NATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROGRAM

DAV operates an extensive network of programs through which dedicated volunteers provide a variety of services to America's heroes. During 2011, the organization devoted \$42,583,583 to these Voluntary Service initiatives.

Our freedoms make America the greatest country in the world, freedoms that were won by our veterans—those men and women who decided that the ideals of our country were greater than themselves. But when that duty is complete, when those heroes return home with the scars and wounds of war, it is our duty to stand up, give back and truly say thank you.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

One of the largest of these programs is our nationwide Transportation Network, through which DAV volunteers drive injured and ill veterans to and from VA medical facilities for treatment. This program fills a substantial community need, since the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities. This program fills a substantial community need as the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities. More than 190 DAV Hospital Service Coordinators manage the transportation needs for disabled veterans to and from nearly every VA medical center in the country. In 2011, 101 vans were added to the Transportation Network. Ford Motor Company also donated \$200,000 for the purchase of an additional eight vans, representing a unique partnership between DAV and corporate America. Since 1987, 2,469 vans have been purchased by the National Organization, Chapters, Departments and the National Service Foundation Columbia Trust at a cost of \$53,680,312. These vans have all been donated to VA hospitals for use in the Transportation Network.

The National Organization devoted \$40,838,100 in contributed services to the Transportation Network in 2011. DAV and Auxiliary volunteers and a growing number of generous nonmembers provided \$1,911,896 million hours and drove 27,330,295 miles to give free rides to 712,687 veterans.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROGRAM

Volunteers contributed an additional 204,130 hours of service to veterans at VA hospitals, clinics and nursing homes through the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program in 2011. Based on our interpretation of generally accepted accounting principles, these in-hospital volunteer hours are not recognized as contributed services; however, it is worth noting that this volunteer time has a value of \$4,360,217, according to the VA. The National Organization's 2011 investment was \$930,505 to coordinate programs through its VAVS and transportation efforts. In addition to services in VA facilities, volunteers annually contribute approximately one million hours at veterans medical facilities outside the VA, such as those operated by state governments.

NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

For injured and ill veterans, the recovery and rehabilitation processes not only challenge them physically, but mentally and emotionally as well. Recreational therapy programs are one of the best ways to address those challenges. For the 25th consecutive year, DAV has co-sponsored, along with the VA, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. This life-changing program has helped veterans overcome the impact of severe injuries and empowered many to take their lives in new directions they might otherwise never have dreamed possible. In 2011, DAV devoted \$526,118 in direct expenditures to this program. That is in addition to other indirect expenditures, which are part of our ongoing VAVS program.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER SCHOLARSHIPS

To encourage our young people to get involved in volunteer work to assist sick and disabled veterans, we created the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program to honor outstanding young volunteers who are active participants in the VA Voluntary Service program. In 2011, a total of \$75,000 in scholarships was awarded to eight outstanding youth volunteers.

CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Another volunteer initiative is DAV's Celebrity Entertainment Program, featuring Major League Baseball Umpires Jerry Layne, retired Major League Umpire Larry Barnett and professional athletes from the National Football League and Major League Baseball. These sports celebrities continue to visit hospitalized veterans in VA medical centers. Actor Gary Sinise, a longtime supporter of veterans and star of the hit TV series "CSI: New York," performed with his Lt. Dan Band for convention-goers. In addition, they have been incredibly generous about spending time with hospitalized veterans and their families at VA medical centers across the country.

LOCAL & STATE VOLUNTEERISM

Chapters, Auxiliary Units, state-level Departments and associated organizations work on behalf of disabled veterans in the communities they serve. These programs range from initiatives for homeless veterans to advocacy for the removal of barriers to handicapped people; from household chores to driving veterans to the store or bank. The Local Veterans Assistance Program, created during the fall of

2007, offers volunteers the opportunity to provide valuable assistance to veterans within their communities. During 2011, 1,253 volunteers donated 166,540 hours of service to veterans living in rural and underserved areas.

In an effort to encourage even greater involvement in the lives of veterans at the community and state levels, the National Service Foundation established the Colorado Trust. Through the Trust, well-funded Chapters and Departments are providing invaluable help to other Chapters and Departments that lack the funds to support their own service programs. In addition to these contributions to the Trust, the DAV National Organization provided another \$44,425 in part for the purchase of Transportation Network vans in 2011. The National Organization has contributed \$4,357,295 to the Trust since its inception.

STATE SERVICE, DISASTER RELIEF, AND MEMORIALS

DAV operates a program of direct grants to help veterans and their families in times of need, as well as a plan to fund state-level services to these veterans and families. During 2011, spending on these programs totaled \$4,096,248.

DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM

When disaster strikes, NSOs are dispatched to the affected area to provide monetary assistance, conduct benefit counseling and offer referral sources. We provided disaster relief grants in the aftermath of natural disasters and emergencies in various areas around the nation to help veterans and their families secure temporary lodging, food and other necessities. During 2011, almost \$76,000 in grants was disbursed to flood, tornado and hurricane victims. Since the program's inception in 1968, \$8,838,306 has been disbursed.

STATE SERVICE PROGRAM

We help fund services that our state-level Departments provide to veterans and their families. In some cases, these Department programs extend, supplement or dovetail services we provide through our nationwide programs. In other cases, Departments have created entirely new programs to meet the unique needs of veterans in their states. Grants to Departments under this program totaled \$3,870,412 in 2011.

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

DAV uses a variety of tools, such as videos, *DAV Magazine*, social media and public service announcements to educate the public about how our mission of service and advocacy has empowered our wounded heroes and their families to take back their lives, return to normalcy and, ultimately, live a high-quality life.

The National Communications Department oversees media relations, publications, contacts with other organizations and a variety of public outreach initiatives to inform all our internal and external audiences about who we are and what we do. It is responsible for producing news releases, speeches, op-eds, brochures, print advertisements, public service announcements, videos and other materials that provide information about DAV and our full range of free services. Beyond these traditional tools, social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube also enable DAV and its members to build an even stronger community to help us carry out our mission, now and in the future. In today's world, both methods of communication are essential to building awareness, appreciation and support for our services to the nation's disabled veterans and their families.

A full-color magazine informs our members about important issues and our government's policies affecting the federal benefits and services they've earned. This bi-monthly publication also highlights the many accomplishments of our state-level Departments and local Chapters nationwide.

DAV also maintains a cordial, professional working relationship with media outlets, reporters and editors who cover veteran-related issues. The Communications Department identifies appropriate DAV representatives to respond to media queries, to provide in-depth research and resources to help explain issues more fully and sharpen the focus of news stories.

A comprehensive Internet website, (www.dav.org) is another vital information and education resource for disabled veterans and the general public. Our website provides timely, easy access to legislative matters, service programs and critical issues. It also allows our members, as well as the general public, to make their voices heard on important public policy issues through an electronic mail feedback feature.

Special events, such as celebrity visits to veterans hospitals and air shows at military bases and civilian venues, help us reach the public to inform them of our free services and volunteer opportunities in their own communities. Our Airshow Outreach program works with the owners of two vintage B-25 Mitchell bombers to bring the DAV's message to these veteran-friendly audiences across the nation. Through this unique outreach program, DAV has been able to reach millions of Americans with our message of service and volunteerism in support of sick and disabled veterans.

These educational public service and outreach programs continue to promote awareness of veterans' issues and honor disabled veterans' service to our nation. A total of \$5,050,113 was spent on publications and other communications in 2011.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OUTREACH

The strength of DAV has always been our individual members, the veterans we serve and those who support our mission. This support has made DAV what it is today.

DAV opens its arms to our nation's wounded heroes, the men and women who live with illnesses and injuries related to their honorable military service. Some injuries are visible, and some are not. We want veterans to know that they are not alone. We are here to help them all, regardless of the severity or degree of their injuries.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The National Membership Department delivers a variety of services to maintain a large, strong and active member base. By coordinating and extending our mission into communities where veterans and their families live, DAV members promote an agenda for the well-being of America's veterans and their families. With 52 state-level Departments and more than 1,536 Chapters nationwide, we closed the 2010/2011 membership year with almost 1.2 million injured and ill wartime veterans.

Membership in DAV is valuable today for many of the same reasons it was worthwhile nine decades ago. DAV members stay educated on the issues and have a vested interest in the well-being and successes of their fellow veterans. Our members are spreading hope and providing services that will ensure them of their unique community and make certain they will not fall through the cracks like so many others did at the turn of the last century.

Unencumbered by profit motives and constraints of government, we focus on value and relevance. Today, with the convergence of technology, globalization and social diversity, DAV will continue to adapt to emerging trends and effectively respond to the needs of veterans throughout the 21st century.

We also offer membership benefits that provide real value on products and services that enhance the lives of veterans and their families. These include discounts on long-distance telephone and Internet services, Ford Motor Company vehicles, Dell and Apple computer products, rental cars, travel services and long-distance moving programs, a prescription drug plan, a legal services network, as well as Hickory Farms and Omaha Steak.

Funds raised from the general public are not used to pay for the \$5,157,690 spent for membership services.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AWARENESS

The men and women returning home from service face obstacles most people can't fathom in their daily lives. They must find jobs and often housing in a difficult economy, as well as relearn how to relate to their families after having been away for long periods of time. Accessing basic and needed health services can be daunting. As many veterans struggle to regain a sense of normalcy, they must start the long and often difficult process of healing and rehabilitation so that they can begin to rebuild the lives they once knew. DAV is here to help them every step of the way.

Too many of our wounded heroes haven't used the benefits and services they've earned. Generally, these veterans aren't aware of their rights and benefits or the free help our National Service Program can provide with filing for VA and other government benefits.

Further, many aren't aware of the wide range of other programs we offer for disabled veterans and their families. In a nontraditional approach, the Public Awareness Outreach Program asks our donors to help identify those veterans and put them in contact with us. In 2011, \$21,517,723 was spent on this large-scale outreach effort, an investment that's making a real difference in the lives of veterans and their families. This program supplements the outreach efforts already built into our other program services. It offers the American public an even greater opportunity to become personally involved in identifying and assisting those men and women who have served our nation.

THE DAV STRUCTURE

Our national programs are administered by a professional staff under the leadership of National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, a disabled veteran of the Vietnam War. Mr. Wilson is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Organization and serves as Secretary of our seven-member Board of Directors. The board is responsible for approval of the annual budget, as well as for the responsible management and investment of all of the organization's assets.

Each member of the Board of Directors is a DAV member. With the exception of the National Adjutant, who is a DAV employee, board members are uncompensated volunteers. Two of these volunteers serve by virtue of their election to national office by DAV's membership. The remaining four Directors are selected by the National Executive Committee from its ranks.

Our fraternal activities are an essential part of DAV's mission of service to disabled veterans. The National Commander, our official spokesperson, is elected each year by the membership at the National Convention. The National Commander chairs the National Executive Committee, which includes five Vice Commanders and 21 District Representatives. All are elected at the National Convention. The immediate Past National Commander also serves on the committee, which receives support and guidance from National Judge Advocate Michael E. Dobmeier of Grand Forks, N.D., and National Chaplain Reverend Ronald R. Ringo, Jr., of Austin, Texas. These positions are also filled by membership election at the National Convention.

Our business structure is designed to vest control of the organization in its membership and to ensure the greatest degree of operational efficiency possible in the delivery of services to disabled veterans and their families. The National Organization funds and operates programs that serve veterans throughout the United States and its territories and possessions.

Fifty-two Departments and 1,536 Chapters augment the service programs of the National Organization on a local level and, in addition, provide the essential framework for our fraternal activities.

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Disabled American Veterans is authorized to display the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance National Charity Seal in recognition of meeting the Alliance's 20 Standards for Charity Accountability. These standards apply to publicly soliciting organizations that are tax exempt under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. The standards seek to encourage fair and honest solicitation practices, to promote ethical conduct by charitable organizations and to advance public support of philanthropy.

NONPROFIT STATUS

The Disabled American Veterans is a tax-exempt organization and contributions made to DAV are tax deductible. DAV is a federally incorporated, nonprofit organization. It was incorporated by an Act of Congress on June 17, 1932. The organization's Congressional Charter can be found at 36 U.S.C. §§ 50301 et seq. DAV is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as tax-exempt under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(4). Contributions are deductible pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 170(c)(3).

