



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2015

Release: 15-107

### Travel grant renewed for rural Alaska veterans accessing health care

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs renewed a transportation grant in the amount of \$250,000 to the State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs to provide transportation options to veterans residing in five rural areas who need to travel to health care services.

“Last fiscal year, this grant reached out to more than 5,900 veterans in rural areas,” said Verdie Bowen Sr., director of the State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs. “Our transportation partners transported Alaska’s veterans across more than 220,000 miles and more than 67,000 nautical miles round trip at no cost to veterans. We provided the first step in ensuring our veterans in some of our rural communities have access to quality care.”

The following five boroughs will continue to receive grant money for transportation under this program: Denali, Matanuska-Susitna, Kodiak Island, Kenai Peninsula and Prince of Wales-Hyder. Veterans living in those communities qualify to use an array of transportation options so that they may seek the health care they need.

The Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs partnered with five transportation organizations to meet those needs: Interior Alaska Bus Line (Denali Borough), Valley Mover (Matanuska-Susitna Borough), Alaska Marine Highway System (Kodiak Island Borough), AAA Alaska Cab, Inc., (Kenai Peninsula Borough) and Inter-Island Ferry System Authority (Prince of Wales-Hyder).

Transportation continues at no cost to veterans requiring access to the VA Medical Clinic or Community Based Outpatient Clinics, hospitals under the Native Health Care Sharing Agreement or VA authorized vendors, such as pharmacies or medical specialists, until all funds are expended for that area.

“I encourage veterans in each of the boroughs identified to contact our transportation partners for schedules and locations for pick up and drop off,” Bowen said. “The renewal is a great victory for our rural veterans.”

The Office of Veterans Affairs has named the grant the Maurice “Mo” Bailey Highly Rural Transportation Grant in honor of the late Mo Bailey. He served in the U.S. Army from 1956-1976 and committed his life toward helping veterans. Bailey was dedicated to rural and urban outreach, providing veterans rides in his aircraft to access care and services, to distributing food boxes to veterans in need. Bailey was always there to serve and was the 2007 recipient of the Governor’s Veterans Advocacy Award.

For more information, please contact either Verdie Bowen Sr. or Forrest Powell at (907)334-0874 or 1-888-248-3682.

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