



For Immediate Release

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Conference to Focus on Native American Veterans Accessing VA Benefits

*Southwest Native American Veterans Association and Isleta Pueblo Veterans
Association Combine Efforts to Empower Native American Veterans*

Albuquerque, NM – July 25, 2014 – The Southwest Native American Veterans Association, Inc. (SWNAVA), an organization dedicated to ensuring access to the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Veterans Housing, and Veterans Business, today announced its collaboration with the Isleta Pueblo Veterans Association in hosting the inaugural Southwest Native American Veterans Conference.

The three-day conference, which will be held September 22-24, 2015 at the Isleta Resort and Casino just south of Albuquerque, will focus on empowering Native American veterans in understanding the process of accessing services through the Veterans Administration.

“Awareness is critical in creating change and improving access to services and benefits offered to all veterans,” said Marvin Trujillo, and officer of SWNAVA and a Native American veteran who served in the U.S. Marine Corps. “This event gives us the unique opportunity to collectively look at areas that can be improved and establish a unified voice.”

According to the 2010 U.S. Census there are over 150,000 American Indian and Alaska Native veterans living in the U.S.; and over 14,000 of them reside in New Mexico. The Pentagon estimates that well over 22,000 American Indian and Alaska Native active duty personnel currently serve across the Armed Forces. Additionally, AIAN population comprises 0.6 percent of minority veterans.

“The American Indian community is an important group within the overall population of military servicemen and women,” said Fred Lujan, Vice Chairman of SWNAVA and a former governor of the Pueblo of Isleta. “There are many state and federal benefits available to veterans, in addition to services and outreach specifically for Native American veterans. The purpose of this event is to hear

from veterans on their needs and focus outreach to state and federal agencies to ensure they understand our needs.”

The conference will kick off with at Veterans Golf Tournament at the Isleta Golf Course on Sunday September 21st at 12:00pm. There will also be a Veterans Pow-Wow on Monday September 22nd 2014. Gourd Dancing will begin at 5:00pm and the Pow Wow will follow. Exhibitors, sponsors, attendees and others interested in the event can learn more at www.swnava.org or contact Carlene Aragon (505) 552-5752 caragon@lagunapueblo-nsn.gov or Glenda Toledo (505) 205-3401 glenda@chamisasprings.com. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

About the Southwest Native American Veterans Association, Inc.

SNAVA is an organization dedicated to ensuring access to proper health care, employment, housing and education to Native American veterans in the southwest. More information about SWNAVA is available at www.swnava.org.

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