



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs



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VA Under Secretary Dedicates New State Veterans Cemetery in Hyden

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves joined state and local officials in Hyden today to dedicate Kentucky's newest state veterans cemetery.

"Kentucky's four existing cemeteries have interred more than 10,000 veterans and dependents since the first state veterans cemetery opened in 2004," Reeves said. "I will say this: Kentucky knows how to take care of its veterans."

"Since 1978, VA has provided over \$766 million in grants to partner with state and tribal veteran cemeteries throughout the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico," Reeves said. "The Kentucky Veterans Cemetery South East (KVCSE) is the 110th veterans cemetery supported by the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program and the fifth in the Commonwealth. We're proud to see Kentucky honors its Veterans and families in such a dignified manner."

"We are pleased that the veterans of southeastern Kentucky now have a secure resting place close to their families," said Benjamin Adams, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. "As at all of our facilities, treating veterans and their families with the utmost respect and compassion is our mission."

“We owe our veterans a great debt of gratitude for their sacrifice and brave service to defend our beloved country and the freedoms we enjoy. Our Southeastern Kentucky veterans and their families deserve these eternal resting memorial grounds marking the valiant service that sets them apart,” said Congressman Hal Rogers. “This is a great way to ensure we continue to honor our local American heroes beyond their years of service for generations to follow.”

“Hyden’s new state veterans cemetery is something we have all worked hard to secure for a long time,” Senator Brandon Smith said. “I am thankful to those in the Department of Veterans Affairs at both the state and federal level for making this possible, and I certainly appreciate the service of our brave veterans across the country and especially those from Southeastern Kentucky.”

“It’s truly an honor to have the fifth and final state veterans cemetery located in my district, said Rep. Tim Couch. “The state of Kentucky can’t do enough to honor our veterans.”

Days of rain ended just in time for the dedication, and the surrounding hills glowed with redbuds at peak color and newly leafed trees. It was standing room only as several hundred people overflowed the committal shelter at the 42-acre cemetery for the dedication of Kentucky’s fifth and last state veterans cemetery. The opening of KVCSE means that every veteran in Kentucky is within 75 miles of a state or national veterans cemetery.

The Director of Kentucky Veterans Cemetery South East is Vaughda Wooten, a native of adjoining Perry County, a retired Army First Sergeant and Kentucky’s first female state veterans cemetery director.

The National Cemetery Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs made a \$6 million grant to the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) in January 2017 for construction and purchase of initial equipment. KDVA then covers the operations and maintenance costs.

The cemetery will expand in four phases, for a total of 4,588 interment spaces by the end of Phase IV.

The year 2018 marks KDVA’s 20th anniversary and two decades of ensuring that all Kentucky veterans and their families obtain the benefits and services they have earned. Other than residential fees for skilled nursing care, KDVA provides its services at no cost to the veteran.

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