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Veterans entrepreneurial program to be held in Milwaukee in February
***FastTrac* program helps veterans initiate and manage small businesses**

(MADISON) – Veterans living in the southeastern part of the state who may be starting a new business, should consider participating in the upcoming ***FastTrac Planning*** entrepreneurial training program being offered by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), in conjunction with The Veterans Corporation.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), in partnership with The Veterans Corporation, is pleased to announce the next course, ***FastTrac Planning***, will begin on February 10, 2005 in Milwaukee on Thursdays from 6-9 p.m. and will run for nine weeks through April 7, 2005. There is no cost for veterans to attend this course. The location for the course will be the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office in Building 6 on the grounds of the Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center complex at 5000 W. National Avenue in Milwaukee.

FastTrac is a national curriculum developed in 1985 and sponsored by the national Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; it is currently offered in 38 states and has over 60,000 graduates. Students interact with experienced and successful entrepreneurs through focused instruction from a superior business curriculum. A special curriculum has been designed to assist veterans initiate or better manage their small businesses.

The first ***FastTrac*** course offered in Wisconsin was in 2003. Since that time five courses have been conducted with nearly 50 graduates. The two courses offered include the ***FastTrac NewVenture***, which teaches the student how to conduct a feasibility study of his or her business concept, and the ***FastTrac Planning***, which leads the student through the preparation of a business plan. All veterans interested in starting a business or receiving additional schooling are encouraged to attend either the ***FastTrac NewVenture*** and/or ***FastTrac Planning*** course(s). The ***FastTrac NewVenture*** is not a prerequisite for the ***FastTrac Planning*** course.

"This is great news for Wisconsin veterans," said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos. "The success of the ***FastTrac*** program is a fine example of the department's mission to administer education benefits for veterans."

"This course assists Wisconsin by helping our veterans," said Scocos, "and by helping to grow Wisconsin's economic base by helping to attract, build, and retain small businesses in the state."

(more)

Anthony Tilidetzke, a young Army veteran from Sussex, Wisconsin, heard about ***FastTrac*** at a WDVA "Supermarket of Veterans Benefits," and again at his job, when WDVA staff spoke about veterans' benefits to employees, including Tilidetzke, who would be affected by their employers' downsizing. "The training was excellent and provided me the tools to be successful," said Tilidetzke. "I appreciated the opportunity to have a member of my management team attend with me and assist in developing my company's feasibility study," he said. By the final night of a course completed in December, Tilidetzke was well underway to starting his own home inspection company.

FastTrac instructor Mike Sitton said that the program, "has done a great deal to support the new veterans' entrepreneurial initiative. It provides needed training to help veterans in starting up their own business."

For more information on the ***FastTrac*** program, contact Joe Bertalan, WDVA, at 1-800-WIS-VETS (800-947-8387) or visit the WDVA web site at [www.dva.state.wi.us/Emp_Entrepreneurial_Trng_\(FastTrac\).asp](http://www.dva.state.wi.us/Emp_Entrepreneurial_Trng_(FastTrac).asp).