



Jim Doyle, Governor  
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## Attention Newsroom—News Release

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# Veterans Benefits Information Fair reaches out to veterans and their families at Fort McCoy

(MADISON) – 575 veterans, military retirees, and their families attended a *Veterans Benefits Information Fair* at Fort McCoy on Friday, September 2, 2005, hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), as part of its “I Owe You” campaign and new “Mission: Welcome Home” initiative, in conjunction with the annual Fort McCoy Retiree Appreciation Day. The *Veterans Benefits Information Fair* is a “one-stop shop” where veterans and their families can apply for an array of federal and state veterans benefits in one convenient location.

This followed the Retiree Appreciation Day activities at Building 905 in which WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos addressed attendees.

"We encouraged veterans and family members to attend," said Scocos, "and we had close to 600 attendees get information about federal VA health care, military medals, and more. Events like this have been very important to expanding the department's outreach to veterans statewide."

Bill Walters, Retirees Service Officer of Fort McCoy, agreed. "In the past, Fort McCoy has always had Retiree Appreciation Day, and the State of Wisconsin has always had veterans benefits fairs," Walters said. "Both events are really informative, and today we came together. Both of these events complemented each other."

As the fourth "I Owe You" event of six scheduled and hosted by the department in 2005 in a statewide effort to ensure that Wisconsin veterans are receiving the millions of dollars of federal benefits for which they are eligible, the information fair featured over 60 providers. The event, presented in conjunction with other agencies such as the VA Hospital, veterans service organizations, and County Veterans Services Officers, brings to about 20,000 the number of Wisconsin veterans and their family members who have been reached by the "I Owe You" campaign. Since 2000, Wisconsin has seen an increase of over \$350 million in new federal VA funding to assist Wisconsin veterans.

Monroe County Veterans Service Officer Kathy Gausmann said, "There's all kinds of information here."

"Many veterans need help," said Aart R. Veldhuizen, Commander of VFW Post 3032 in Viroqua, Wisconsin. "My son was in Iraq, my Dad was in World War II, and I'm a Vietnam veteran. I came here to learn, and to help other veterans."

(more)

Said Secretary Scocos, "Not only are we providing information to older veterans but at the same time we are reaching out to service men and women returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom."

A *Veterans Benefits Information Fair* will be held in Green Bay at the Oneida-Radisson Hotel and Conference Center on September 21, and a two-day *Supermarket of Veterans Benefits* is planned for October 14 and 15 at the Wisconsin State Fair Park in Milwaukee.

For more information about upcoming events or benefits information, visit the WDVA website at [www.dva.state.wi.us](http://www.dva.state.wi.us), contact a local County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) or Tribal Veterans Service Officer (TVSO), or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).