



Wisconsin Veterans "Salute" Legislators *Secretary Scocos unveils Mission: Welcome Home Logo*

Providing veterans the opportunity to thank state legislators and look at the future of veterans' issues in Wisconsin, more than 600 people attended the 2005 *Salute to the Legislature* on February 15th at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center in Madison. This year's *Salute* was hosted by the **American Legion Department of Wisconsin** and co-hosted by the **Disabled American Veterans Department of Wisconsin**, and **Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Wisconsin**, with assistance from the **Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)** and additional financial contributions from numerous other veterans' organizations.



WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos addresses the audience at the 13th annual *Salute to the Legislature* as Al Richards, State Commander of the American Legion Department of Wisconsin, listens.



Gov. Jim Doyle informs veterans and legislators about his budget recommendations. Left to right are: Sec. Scocos, Veterans of Foreign Wars State Commander Bill Backes, Disabled American Veterans State Commander Henry Williams, and American Legion State Commander Al Richards.

Every February, state legislators are invited to the *Salute* to talk with veterans from their districts, many of whom travel from as far north as Ashland. **WDVA** Secretary John A. Scocos introduced members of the **Board of Veterans Affairs** and Governor Jim Doyle. He saluted the Governor and the Legislature on behalf of the WDVA, veterans' organizations, veterans and their families, for the bipartisan support veterans have received from them.

Governor Doyle said, "I am struck by the service our veterans have provided when they returned to civilian life. Over 450,000 men and women from Wisconsin have served and they continue to be Wisconsin's best. Thirty-four Wisconsin service members have lost their lives and we re-dedicate ourselves to them. In Wisconsin, we thank and honor our veterans by providing them with the most comprehensive collection of benefits. I commend Secretary Scocos and the veterans' community for addressing the challenges of the Veterans Trust Fund directly and honestly. We want to ensure that Wisconsin remains the best in the nation. Our veterans today and in the future need us. *Mission: Welcome Home* will bring this newest generation home with open arms. We have great respect for what they have done."

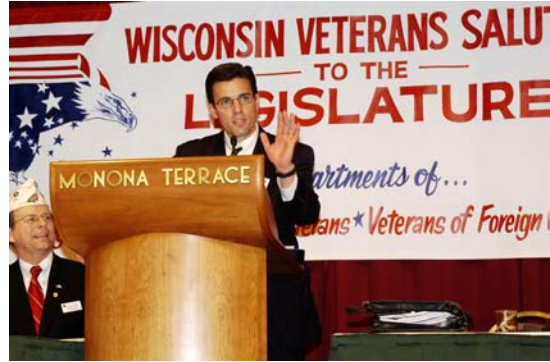
"I am truly honored to be here today among such a distinguished audience," said Secretary Scocos. "I want to personally thank Governor Jim Doyle not just for attending the event but for the strong support his office and administration have given to Wisconsin veterans. I also want to thank the legislative leaders and all members of the Legislature who have provided incredible support to our veterans over the years."

In Secretary Scocos' closing remarks he unveiled the new look of the department's latest initiative, *Mission: Welcome Home*. This new logo, as shown above, is now included on the department's web page www.dva.state.wi.us and is another step in this exciting program. Through the support of many civic and veteran service organizations, county veterans service offices and communities as a whole are getting involved, helping returning service members and families receive the assistance and support they need.

The formal program also included remarks from veterans' organizations and legislative leaders, and was followed by an evening reception where information on Wisconsin veterans benefits and services was available.



After speaking, Gov. Doyle (at left) talks with Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs members Ken Wendt (center) and Walter Stenavich (far right) as he shakes hands with Mrs. Ann Stenavich (second from right). Other dignitaries are, from left, Rep. John Townsend (seated), Board Member Marvin Freedman, and Board Member Mack Hughes.



Speaker of the Wisconsin State Assembly John Gard (R-Peshtigo) tells the audience of over 600 at the *Salute* about his commitment to veterans, as Al Richards, Commander of the American Legion Department of Wisconsin, listens.



Representative Gabe Loeffelholz (R-Platteville) at center, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, meets with heads of veterans service organizations.



Helen Forbeck of U.S. Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin's office, and State Senate Minority Leader Judy Robson (D-Beloit) talk with Past State Commander (2003-04) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Al Kochenderfer.



State Senator Ron Brown (R-Eau Claire), Chair of the Senate Veterans Committee, talks with Ken Kuehn, state Legislative Director of the Disabled American Veterans.



State Senator Fred Risser (D-Madison), at center, talks with veterans from among the over 600 attendees at the *Salute to the Legislature* event on February 14, 2005 at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center in Madison.

A special thanks to: Governor Doyle and the Wisconsin Legislature; Al Richards, Commander of the **American Legion Department of Wisconsin**; the entire Wisconsin veterans service community; the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 132d Army Band; and all who attended the event at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center.

