

**Interior Alaska Veterans Cemetery Design and Planning**

**FY2010 Request:**

**\$250,000**

**Reference No:**

**47882**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Life / Health / Safety

**Category:** Health/Human Services

**Location:** Fairbanks Areawide

**Contact:** John Cramer

**House District:** Fairbanks Areawide (HD 7-11)

**Contact Phone:** (907)428-6003

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2009 - 06/30/2013

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Alaska veterans are in need of a United States Department of Veterans Affairs certified cemetery in the interior region of our state. Alaska has the highest number of veterans per capita of any state in the union. As the veteran population continues to grow, access to the hard-earned burial rights becomes harder to obtain. The purpose of this project is to design and construct a dedicated State Veterans Cemetery in or near Fairbanks on donated land. Veterans in this region must travel 350 miles to Anchorage to the nearest veterans' cemetery with available grave space. The next nearest dedicated national veterans' cemetery is in Sitka, 750 miles away and can only be reached by air or boat/ship.

<b>Funding:</b>	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>FY2012</u>	<u>FY2013</u>	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000			\$1,000,000
<b>Total:</b>	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

No prior funding history for this project.

**Project Description/Justification:**

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs requests initial funding for the planning and design of a veterans cemetery in the interior region. Alaska veterans deserve access to a military cemetery in honor of their service and recognition of their sacrifices while serving our country.

The purpose of this project is to fund the planning and design of a dedicated State Veterans Cemetery in or near Fairbanks. The FY2010 request includes funding for the first phase of this project, planning and design, with construction costs being requested in FY2011. The state has the unique opportunity to leverage federal funding reimbursement in the future to offset costs, possibly even some construction costs, contingent upon the state's commitment to ongoing operations and maintenance of the facility. With state funding support, federal funds may be available for community support of the facility as well. (See Funding section below.)

Background

Veterans in this region must travel 350 miles to Anchorage, the nearest veterans' cemetery with available grave space. The next nearest dedicated national veterans' cemetery is in Sitka, over 750 miles away and can only be reached by air or boat/ship.

The Fairbanks area has the second densest population of veterans in Alaska. There are an estimated 11,000 veterans who reside within a radius of 75 miles centered in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) and are not served by a veterans' cemetery. Additionally, Fairbanks is centrally located in the interior portion of Alaska and is an air and road hub to many smaller, outlying villages on and off the road system, none of which have a veterans' cemetery. The Fairbanks North Star Borough is also home to Fort Wainwright Army Base, Eielson Air Force Base and is within 75 miles of Clear Air Force Station.

The United States Veterans Administration estimates that 1500 veterans will pass away over the next ten years in areas located within 75 miles of the Fairbanks area. It is also estimated that 50% of those veterans would seek burial in a new state veterans' cemetery. In addition, one family member for each two veterans would also seek burial in the cemetery. It is estimated that there would be approximately 1125 eligible persons seeking burial over the next ten years, with an average of approximately 112 seeking burial each year.

#### Funding

Estimated project costs for planning, design, and construction of the dedicated cemetery range between \$750.0 and \$2 million. Additionally, operating costs would be required once the facility opens in 2014 or 2015. It is the desire of the proponents of this project to obtain donated land for the cemetery, reducing the cost of the construction phase of this project. As stated above, the project costs of \$250,000 in FY2010 will provide for the design and development of a new veterans cemetery. Future year appropriations are estimated at \$250,000 through completion of the project and to cover start-up costs and operating costs until such time that federal grant funding is made available to the community. It is estimated that yearly operational and maintenance costs may run approximately \$250,000 per year. State assistance in future operating costs is anticipated to leverage federal grant funding assistance for the FNSB in operating and maintaining the cemetery in the future.

The basic design of the Interior Alaska State Veterans Cemetery will be to provide the veterans of this area with a lasting memorial. Design goals include offering the most efficient and effective space utilization in all aspects of the design concept.