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KENT COUNTY NEWS RELEASE  
ADMINISTRATION



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 22, 2015

**Board Approves Funding for New  
Kent County Department of Veterans Affairs Facility**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – The Kent County Board of Commissioners this morning unanimously approved renovations for new offices for the Kent County Department of Veterans Affairs (KCDVA). Starting this spring, services will be provided at 836 Fuller NE, located on just north of I-196 in Grand Rapids. Funding for the project comes from the County’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) fund – and not from the recently passed Veterans Dedicated Millage.

The Veterans Affairs Office, currently located at 82 Ionia, is in need of a facility that is more accommodating to its Veteran clientele. “This location will help our veterans and their family members access much-needed services,” said Carrie Roy, Director of Kent County Department of Veterans Affairs. “The site on Fuller NE offers on-site parking, including handicap spaces steps from the main entry, and a more visible location, with more square footage.” The building at 836 Fuller NE previously housed the Area Community Service Employment and Training Council (ASCET); the cost to retrofit the facility for the KCDVA is \$90,000.

Kent County voters approved a millage in November to fund expanding services for veterans. The millage generates slightly over \$1 million for increased outreach and emergency services, and allows the KCDVA to more than double the hours that staff work on federal claims assistance. “Our Board remains dedicated to making sure we take care of the men and women who sacrificed for our freedom. We’re proud to say that no millage funds will be used for these renovations,” says Dan Koorndyk, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. “This site is a win-win for our veterans, situated along a bus line, and in a location that will be easy for our veterans to find.” The new site also provides an entry without security screening, which has proven to be challenging for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The KCDVA helps County veterans and their dependents find veteran-related benefits. This includes claims for Federal benefits, State benefits, (administering the Michigan Veterans’ Trust Fund), and County benefits (Soldier’s & Sailor’s Relief Fund and burials). The KCDVA also provides referrals to local non-profit agencies. The KCDVA has recognized a “Return on Investment” of approximately \$974,000 in federal benefits annually per service officer; dollars which are reinvested in the community in the form of groceries, gas, clothes, and miscellaneous services. This is a 2310% ROI of the County General Funds. Since the Department’s creation, it has helped secure over \$15.5 million for local disabled veterans.

County official expect to hold an open house at the new site at the end of March.

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