

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

The year of 2006 was a year of many challenges for the Veterans' Services Department. The Department has seen increased activity from Veterans in need of services. Energy, medications and medical costs have risen dramatically and in turn many Veterans on fixed incomes have fallen on difficult times.

This office has endeavored to take applications for Veterans and their families and to find services for those Veterans in need. "The Welcome Home Bill" was enacted and expands benefits to Veterans, such as; a \$1,000 bonus for those who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, an increase of \$500 in annuity payments, education and fee waivers at all State and Community Colleges, and an increase in insurance death benefits from \$5,000 to \$100,000.

The Commonwealth changed the statutory exemption for property taxes which has increased amounts and reimbursements for eligible Veterans. In addition, Veterans who have been determined to be permanently disabled will now be eligible for an excise tax exemption.

During this report period your Veterans' Service Officer has increased efforts in the area of outreach by providing ongoing information to the media and is committed to serve local Veterans and their dependents in whatever way possible.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert A. Mathison
Director, VSO