

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
4141 North S. Herrera Way, Phoenix, AZ 85012

September 10, 2015

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners Present

Brett Rustand
Andrew Griffin
Phillip Hanson (via telephone)
Ron Perkins
Ryan Peters
Arlthe Rios
David Tolliver

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Wanda Wright, Director
Dave Hampton, PIO/Legislative Liaison
Tera Scherer, Executive Assistant

Invited Guests

Ron Quillen

Call to Order – Chairman Brett Rustand called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Chairman Rustand called for the approval of the July 9, 2015 Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes. There being no changes to the minutes Commissioner Perkins moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Tolliver seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Introduction and Welcome of New Commissioners – Chairman Rustand acknowledged newly appointed Commissioners to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission. Commissioner Arlthe Rios served five years active duty in the Army as a Medic. She resides in Sierra Vista with her fiancé where she serves as the Clerk of the Board for Cochise County Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Ryan Peters served in the Marine Corps before being medically discharged. He is currently the Director of the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions and resides in Chandler with his wife and two children.

Ron Quillen, Goodyear, AZ

Mr. and Mrs. Ron and Gail Quillen of Goodyear presented plans to build a Veterans Memorial Building and Community Center in the southwest valley. Mr. Quillen has approached the Advisory Commission to seek assistance and guidance on the project, as well as conveying the need for such a facility in the Goodyear area.

Mr. Quillen hopes to rent the building out to the community for sustainability and offer the facility to local veterans groups to meet. His hope is to house an information center for veterans.

Director Wright suggested that his first step needs to be securing the land from the town of Goodyear before the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services can commit to providing support. She asked Mr. Quillen to keep the Department informed on his progress.

Agency Announcements and Updates

Wanda Wright, Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services, reports that she and Assistant Deputy Director, John Scott, visited a majority of our Veteran Benefit Offices throughout Arizona in the last couple of months. While on those visits the offices were evaluated for ease of access for veterans, primarily paying attention to parking, ADA compliancy, and the overall appearance of the facilities. Their goal is to provide a place that is warm, inviting and will make a veteran want to visit the facilities.

Director Wright has also been visiting veteran organizations throughout the state. Most recently she visited a group in Sierra Vista and she continues to be impressed with the city's veterans organizations. She stated that the Department will be looking at VSOs (Veteran Service Organizations) throughout the state and looking at what is offered in the rural areas. She hopes the Department will be able to put together a network of VSOs so that they can work together to inform veterans of what is available throughout the state and coordinate with each other for the benefit of our veterans.

The Department has partnered with DES (Department of Economic Security) on DVOP/LVRS (Disabled Veterans Outreach Program/Local Veterans Employment Representatives), which is the veteran component for the employment division of DES that disabled veterans and any other veteran needing assistance with employment, can utilize. Recently the Department was invited to their executive leadership meeting and presented them with some of our specialized training. Currently the Department is working on combined VBC training with DVOP/LVRS training so there will be a warm hand off between the two and so anyone that comes in contact with a veteran at these organizations will know exactly how to begin the process to help veterans with employment needs.

Director Wright has been working with Director Chuck Ryan of the Department of Corrections (DOC). to create a block of 125 veteran prisoners and created a program that will, up to two years from time of release, help with their reintegration by assisting with the job search, reinstating their veteran benefits, and provide a continuation of care after they've served their sentence.

The Veteran Supportive Campus program continues; a total of 13-14 schools have been recognized now with two or three more in the pipeline for completion. Also with the Veteran Supportive Employers program, up to 20 now that have qualified with DES and DOC being recognized in November for being the first agencies in state government to achieve that status. Governor Ducey has been asked to present those agencies with a plaque as well as to sign a proclamation to make the month of November "Veteran Employment" month. These programs segue back to the Roadmap for Employment and the strategic plan of getting our veteran unemployment rates down.

Cemeteries are on track to open in January. The dedication is scheduled for Marana for March and June for Bellemont/Camp Navajo.

Budgets were submitted in September and the Department continues to ask for support for a state veteran home in Flagstaff and a home in the western part of the state near Lake Havasu, Kingman, Bullhead City area.

Commissioner Griffin spoke of the Flagstaff area's VSOs collaboration and resource sharing that he has helped to organize. He stated that currently there are about 30 organizations in that area that participate in quarterly meetings. He stated his ability to reach out to leadership of VFWs and American Legions and similar VSOs in other areas to help get them set up and started on their own network of collaboration within the individual areas. Commissioner Griffin opened discussion of the possibility of the Veterans Advisory Commission having a role in organizing this throughout the more rural areas of the state.

Open Discussion for the Good of the Order

Chairman Rustand used this time to review the purpose of the Veterans Advisory Commission. *Click [here](#) to view the presentation.*

Chairman Rustand asked the Commissioners to reach out to their communities within their assigned regions and visit with area VSOs as well as the Department's VBC offices.

Commissioner Perkins reminded everyone of the upcoming Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony coming up on October 23 at the Phoenix Marriott Tempe Buttes Resort. Information is available online at azuav.org.

Commissioner Peters gave an overview of the activities around Phoenix for Marine Week.

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m. The next Advisory Commission meeting will be held November 12, 2015, at the Phoenix Veteran Home.

Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission (AVSAC)



Arizona's Veterans



Arizona is home to:

- 20,000 Active Duty Service Members
 - 13,000 National Guard & Reserve
 - 500,000+ Veterans
- + their immediate and extended families

Arizona has 5 major military installations:

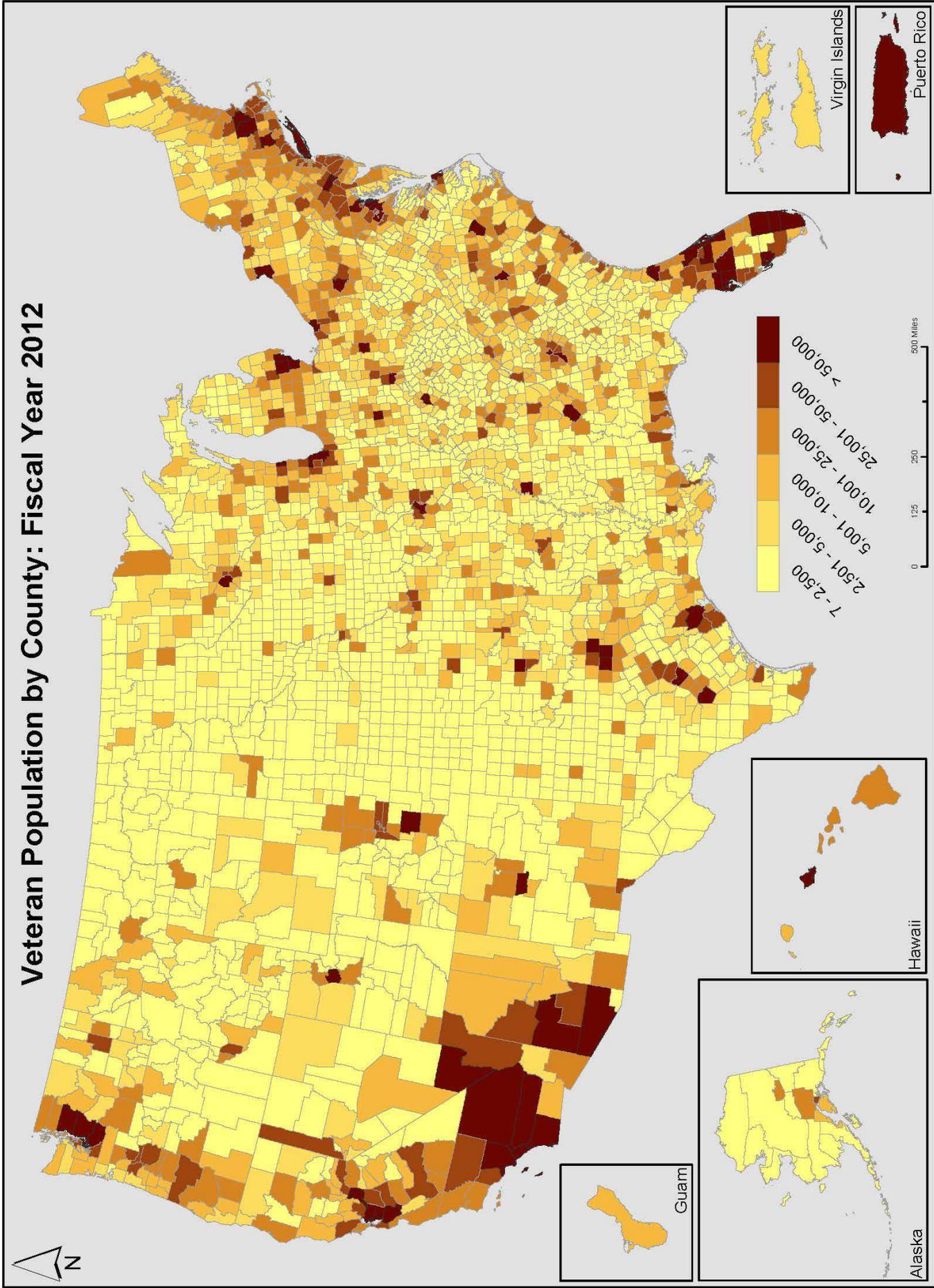
- Davis Mothan Air Force Base in Tucson
- Fort Huachuca in Sierra Vista
- Luke Air Force base in Glendale
- Marine Corp Air Station in Yuma
- Yuma Proving Grounds

Significant Numbers

- More than 561,000* Arizonans are veterans. Or, about the total of residents in Yuma, Mohave, La Paz, and Coconino counties
- 76,000 receiving disability compensation or pension benefits
- VA expenditures alone in Arizona total \$2 billion

*All figures have been rounded. Sources: Arizona Office of Employment and Population Statistics, *State Summary*, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

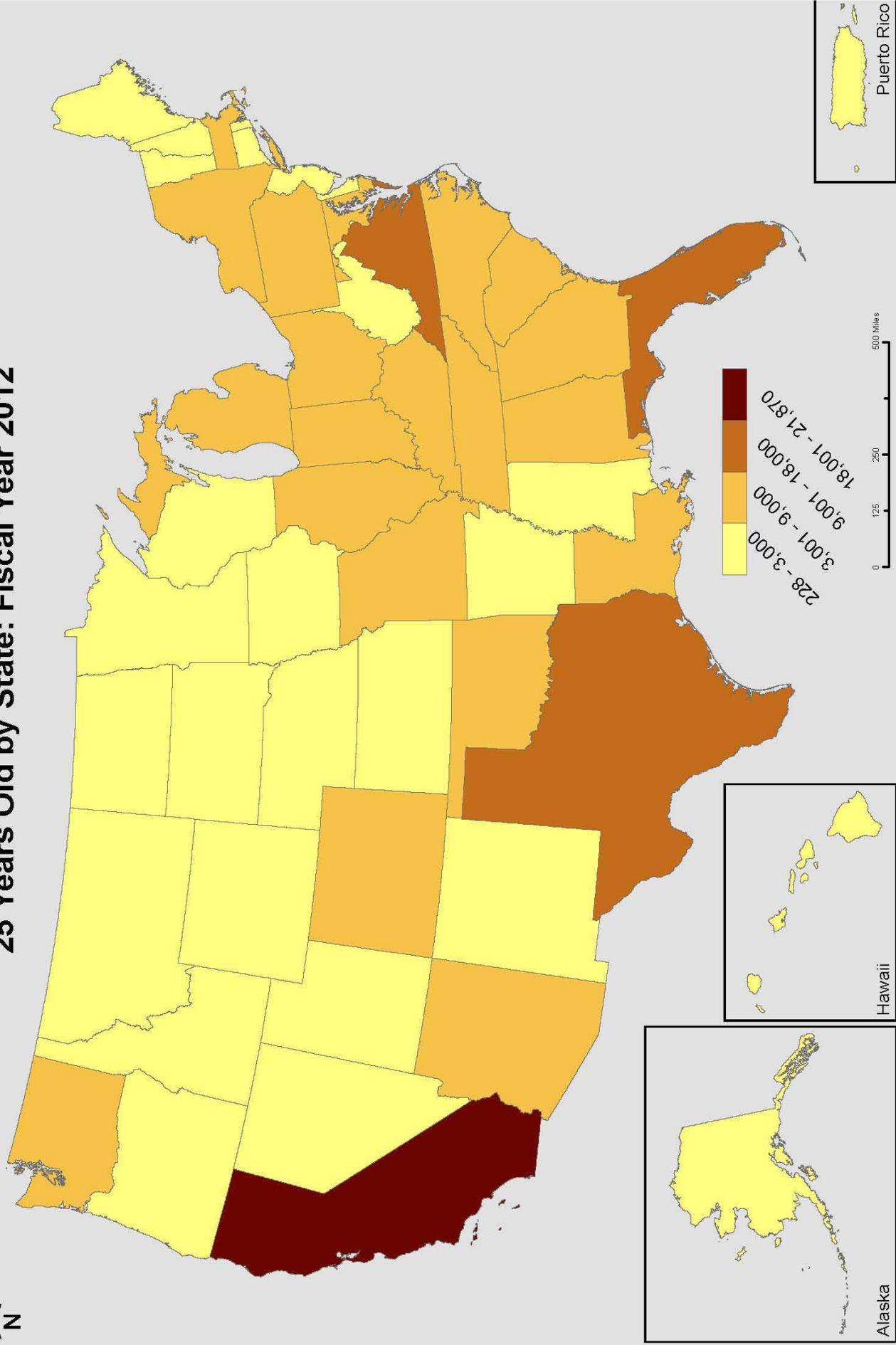
Veteran Population by County: Fiscal Year 2012



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop), 2011

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

Veteran Population Under 25 Years Old by State: Fiscal Year 2012



Substantial Assets

- 280,000 veterans in the Arizona labor force
- 61,000 Post-9/11 era veterans
- 34,000 Arizonans are using GI Bill education benefits
- Veterans 65+ outnumber younger veterans now but not for long

Sources: Arizona Office of Employment and Population Statistics, *State Summary*, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Memorial Day 2012: Combatting High Unemployment Among Young Veterans*. The U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee Chairman's Staff.



“Veterans are not the problem, they are the solution. You have a ready workforce of dedicated, hard working, and energetic young people that have experience beyond their years. The communities that tap into this resource will find limitless possibilities. The number one cure for a vet who is feeling disconnected when returning from combat is integration into the community. It is about abilities and not disabilities.”

-COL David Sutherland

Arizona Revised Statute 41-602

- Nine Members (currently eight)
- Members appointed by the Governor
- Members shall be veterans submitted by each veteran organization in this state holding a charter granted by congress or recognized by the department as a veterans' organization that is actively involved in supporting veteran affairs in this state
- Not more than two members shall be appointed from any one veterans' organization
- Three year term (Members shall not serve more than two consecutive three year terms)
- Shall meet on the call of the chairman but at least once during each three month period. (Currently meeting every other month; Executive meeting opposite full meeting month) No action may be taken without a quorum
- Commission **shall provide policy advice** to the governor and the director regarding veterans' issues

Substantial Assets

Brett M Rustand Chairman Nominated by VFW Serving 2 nd term; Tucson	Charles Andrew Griffin Vice Chairman Nominated by MOPH Serving 1 st term; Flagstaff
Ronald James Perkins Immediate Past Chairman Nominated by MOWW Serving 2 nd term; Green Valley	Phillip J. Hanson Commissioner Nominated by NWVA Serving 2 nd term; Peoria
David Toliver, Sr. Commissioner Nominated by TA Serving 2 nd term; Goodyear	Arlethe G. Rios Commissioner Nominated by Serving 1 st term; Sierra Vista
Ryan Peters Commissioner Nominated by DAV Serving 1 st term; Chandler	<u>Vacant</u>
<u>Vacant</u>	

Strategic Plan

Mission Statement: To promote public awareness and enhance the well being of Arizona Veterans and their families

Goal I: to provide effective communications to the Governor of Arizona and the Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Service (ADVS)

Goal II: To have an outreach program throughout the state for veterans and their families.

Goal III: to promote public awareness, garner support for the veteran community and their families while identifying their issues within the state of Arizona.

AVSAC Goal I

To provide effective communications to the Governor of Arizona and the director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Service (ADVS)

Objectives:

- Communicate as required, but at least yearly with the Governor of Arizona and schedule meetings regularly, but at least quarterly
- Work with other Arizona commissions, boards, agencies and organizations as appropriate
- Participate in legislative and administrative processes in support of Arizona's veteran community and their families
 - a. Recommend new legislation and administrative initiatives where needed
 - b. Assess, prioritize, and make recommendations on existing or proposed legislation as required, but at least annually, early in the legislative session
 - c. Testify before the legislature when required

AVSAC Goal II

To have an outreach program throughout the state for veterans and their families.

Objectives:

- Partner with ADVS Veteran Benefit Counselors (VBC's) on a regular basis
- Geographically divide the state into regions and assign commissioners to specific regions that mirror the regional assignments of the VBC's
 - a. Establish liaison between the commission and regions in coordination with VBC's
 - b. Develop points of contact within each region
 - c. Outreach activities shall be held throughout the state
- Establish committees when necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth by the commission
- Through ADVS maintain a Resource Guide to include community and social services points of contact available to the veteran community and their families

AVSAC Goal III

To promote public awareness, garner support for the veteran community and their families while identifying their issues within the state of Arizona.

Objectives:

- Through the outreach program
 - a. Identify issues and needs of the veterans' community and their families
 - b. Conduct a statewide communications effort to inform Arizona veterans and their families
- Maintain a promotional information publication for the Commission
- Represent the Office of the Governor and/or the ADVS at ceremonies, presentations, or other events as appropriate.
- Stay abreast of issues of veteran minority groups and their families, i.e. homeless veterans, women veterans, rural veterans, and disabled veterans

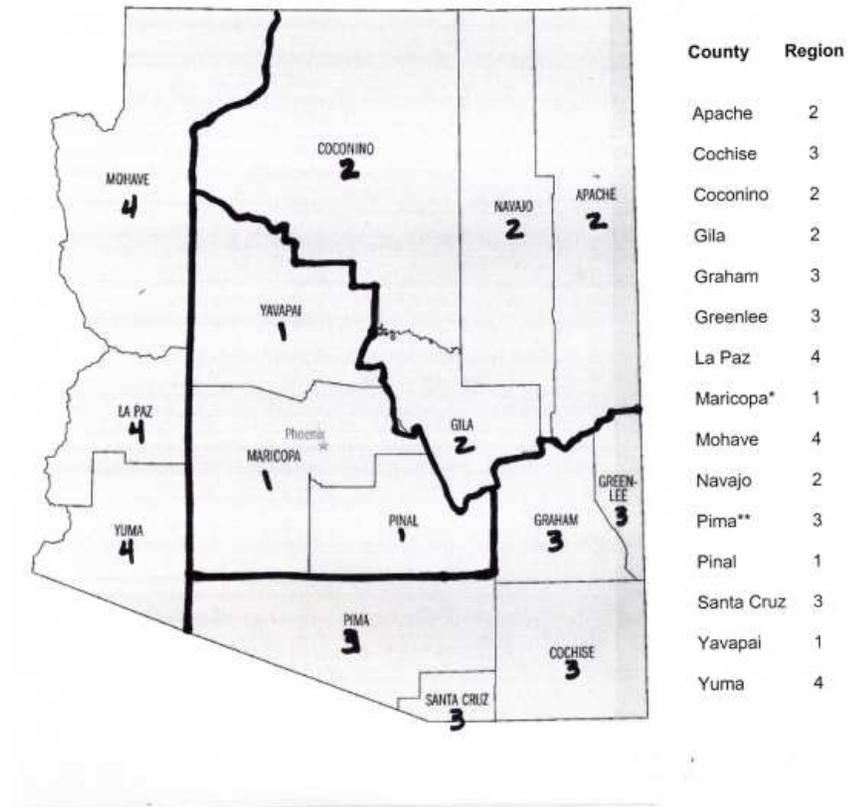
Commissioner Region Assignments

Region 1: Hanson & Peters

Region 2: Griffin & Perkins

Region 3: Rustand & Rios

Region 4: Toliver



Questions?

