

## House Republican Press Release

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### Gov. Rell and Mike Alberts Tour State Veterans Home



#### *Rep. Alberts Says New 125-Bed Facility is on Track for 2008 Completion*

State Rep. Mike Alberts, R-50<sup>th</sup>, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret, Woodstock, joined Gov. M. Jodi Rell for a tour of the Connecticut State Veterans Home. He said work is progressing on a new \$33.8 million, 125-bed health care building, and it is expected to be occupied next year.

“Our goal is to assure that veterans receive modern treatment in a comfortable setting. This will be a state of the art residential and treatment facility. It is a phenomenal building that also takes advantage of the latest energy efficiency standards.” said Rep. Alberts. “The new building it is on track for completion in January 2008 and will be equipped and occupied in the spring.”

Rep. Alberts, ranking member on the legislature’s Veterans Affairs Committee, noted that the state legislature, the governor and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have provided funds to make much-needed improvements to the home located in Rocky Hill.

“This is a cooperative initiative of the state and federal government, so that state funds are maximized with the addition of federal grants,” said Rep. Alberts, who is an Air Force veteran.

He said the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs also has purchased and is equipping a new mobile outreach center called the Vet Express. The van soon will be traveling from town to town to assist veterans with processing benefit claims and to provide general assistance.

Since the 1940s, the state Veterans Home has provided rehabilitation to Connecticut veterans, with the goal of returning as many resident veterans as possible to society as productive citizens, capable of independent living

The health care facility at the Connecticut Veterans’ Home provides long term care to veterans with chronic and disabling medical conditions. These conditions include but are not limited to heart and lung disease, stroke, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and other dementias. The program also provides hospice care, palliative care and respite care.

Separately, Rep. Alberts noted that Connecticut has recently approved ten new veterans for induction into its Veterans Hall of Fame.

Governor Rell created the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame in 2005 through Executive Order No. 5 to pay permanent tribute to those citizens who have served the nation with distinction in the U.S. Armed Forces and then returned home to enrich their communities and state through distinguished careers and selfless public service.

Eight of this year's inductees are currently living in Connecticut while two honorees are Congressional Medal of Honor recipients who will be inducted posthumously.

One from eastern Connecticut, Edward Washburn Whitaker, was honored posthumously. Mr. Whitaker, a native of Killingly and graduate of Ashford public schools, fought in 82 engagements during the Civil War as a member of the First Regiment Connecticut Cavalry Volunteers rising to the rank of brevet brigadier general at the age of 23. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his gallant actions at Reams Station, Virginia in June 1864. After the War, he served as superintendent of the U.S. Capitol Building and was appointed postmaster of Hartford by President Grant. During his post-war years in Connecticut, he organized and led several new veterans' organizations.

In 2005, Governor Rell created the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame to recognize the post-military achievements of generations of outstanding veterans from the state, living or deceased, and to spotlight their contributions to their community, including education, public safety, politics, recreation and other areas of public service. Veterans who served in all military conflicts are eligible to be considered, including World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and service in the Global War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq.

State Rep. Mike Alberts serves the 50<sup>th</sup> Assembly District of Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret and Woodstock in the state House of Representatives.