



PRESS RELEASE

DATE: February 20, 2015
CONTACT: Cindy Dicken, Director (303) 679-2371

For Immediate Release

New Veterans Services Roles Announced

- *County Employees Serve Needs of Adults and Veterans* -

Cindy Dicken, Public Health and Human Services division director for Clear Creek County, has announced a new and expanded role for the Veterans Service Officer of the county, and the selection of a Public Health Nurse as chairperson of the Clear Creek Veterans Coalition.

Troy Erickson, formerly program director of the Mt. Evans Qualifying House/Rite of Passage, will become the new Veterans Service Officer (VSO) of the county with expanded duties and training to include adult caseworker support. Veterans Services Officers assist local veterans and their dependents and family members in securing all benefits to which they may be entitled. The Colorado Department of Veterans and Military Affairs require that every county have a VSO. Funding is provided through state and federal Veterans Administrations Offices based on population and the needs of Veterans in the described county. Clear Creek County has more than 1,500 Veterans with nearly 800 who seek support from a variety of providers.

"I want to ensure that those who have served and their families can benefit from what they've earned," says Erickson, "and they need to be recognized and engaged in our community." Those served by the VSO include active duty military and their families. Erickson's office will be located in the Community Resource Center at 1531 Colorado Blvd. in Idaho Springs. Office hours are 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday.

In expanding VSO duties to include case management, Dicken says, "We have found that we best help Veterans when we support a wellness approach in all aspects of their lives. Sometimes that means awareness of psychological issues, the impact of a physical or mental disability, and everything from housing to transportation challenges." The Veterans Administration owns and maintains a van scheduled by the local VSO to provide much needed transportation services to meet the medical needs of Veterans.

Erickson has a degree in Criminal Justice and a BA in Behavioral Science. He had three years of active duty in the U.S. Army and three years in the Maine Army National Guard. He was a charter member of the Veterans Coalition, established about three years ago in an effort to combine the outreach missions of the Elks Lodge, the American Legion Post, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the VSO of Clear Creek County. The Coalition was the vision of George Clark, Cindy Dicken and Erickson himself.

Wendy Trogdon RN, Public Health Nurse specializing in adult services and Emergency Preparedness for the county, has accepted the position of Chairperson of the Clear Creek County Veterans Coalition, a group of 15 members whose mission is to ensure that Veterans in the county and their families are aware of and can obtain the benefits and resources entitled to them. The Coalition partners with many community organizations including the Sheriff's Office, Victims Advocates, and both Clear Creek and Gilpin Departments of Health and Human Services.

As the central planning agency for local Veterans activities and events, the Coalition takes responsibility for archiving local military history and preserving Veteran Memorials. The group strives to enhance patriotism, promote professional activities and seek community support for Veterans and their families. An outstanding achievement of the Coalition this year was to secure the re-naming of the Idaho Springs Twin Tunnels in honor of Veterans. The Coalition meets once a month on the first Thursday of every month at 4 p.m. at the Elks Lodge.

Ms. Trogdon is a retired Major in the United States Air Force, and was chosen through a nomination and voting process of the Coalition. She has been active in the planning and coordination of the annual Veterans Fair in the county and will serve a two year term.

Troy Erickson and Wendy Trogdon are excited about their new roles. Says Erickson, "We find that folks hesitate to come forward to receive what they've earned, so we're here locally to reach out to them."

To contact the VSO Officer, Troy Erickson, call 720-272-9584. For more information on the Clear Creek Veterans Coalition, contact Wendy Trogdon at 720-583-5387.

###