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## Groundbreaking Date Announced for State Veterans Home in Bradley County State Building Commission approves federal funding for the new State Veterans Home

**NASHVILLE** – Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) Commissioner Courtney Rogers and Tennessee State Veterans Home Board (TSVHB) Executive Director Ed Harries today announced the groundbreaking date for the Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans Home as Wednesday, August 21, 2019 in Cleveland. This announcement follows approval by the Tennessee State Building Commission (SBC) earlier today of a \$30,524,427 grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the new State Veterans Home.

“There have been many dedicated organizations and individuals at the local and state levels – both public and private – which have been involved in this process since it began, so it is an honor to finally share this news today,” said TDVS Commissioner Courtney Rogers. “Planning for the groundbreaking ceremony actually began over two months ago in anticipation of the final VA grant approval, and our department greatly appreciates the support of the many stakeholders who are committed to getting this project officially started.”

“At Tennessee State Veterans’ Homes we consider it an honor and a privilege to care for America’s heroes,” said TSVHB Executive Director Ed Harries. “Our incredible staff goes above and beyond to ensure our residents receive the highest quality of care. We are thrilled that we finally get the opportunity to serve the veterans of Bradley County and surrounding areas.”

The new Tennessee State Veterans’ Home will provide resident-centered and individualized care for qualified veterans. The total estimated \$47 million project will fund construction of a single-story 108-bed intermediate and skilled care nursing facility. Designed as a neighborhood concept, it will consist of six 18-bedroom residential houses interconnected by interior shared support spaces spanning 110,000 square feet. Future residents will have access to a community center that contains therapeutic spaces, dining areas, activity rooms, and resident support offices.

Efforts have been underway for over 16 years to locate a state veterans’ home in Cleveland for the nearly 50,000 veterans who live in the six-county area. The Bradley County Commission and Cleveland City Council passed resolutions in 2003 to support a nursing facility for veterans in need of long-term care. An anonymous donation of \$3 million was pledged in 2006, and the City of Cleveland and Bradley County have since contributed over \$2 million each.

“I can remember many events in my lifetime that I anticipated, that when achieved were truly worth the waiting time involved,” said Bradley County Mayor D. Gary Davis. “Being informed that construction will soon begin on our community’s Veterans Home has to be some of the greatest news that I have ever received.”

“Today is truly a day that will be marked in the history books of Cleveland, TN, and Bradley County,” said Cleveland City Mayor Kevin Brooks. “As we gladly receive today’s final approval from the SBC

for our new Tennessee State Veterans Home, we honor and acknowledge the service of all those who will one day be living in this brand new home.”

In 2008, then-State Representative Kevin Brooks sponsored House Resolution 351 urging the Governor to consider planning and construction of a state veterans’ home in Bradley County. That same year, the Southeast Tennessee Veterans Home Council (SETVHC) was formed to promote the project and to help raise the much needed 35% contribution from state and local sources to qualify for federal funding.

“It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the groundbreaking for the veterans’ home here in Bradley County,” said State Representative Mark Hall. “With the large percent of veterans here in the county, this project is much needed and long-awaited.” Representative Hall was the original chair of the SETVHC.

The families of Steve Williams, Thomas Williams, and Robert Wright donated 28 acres of land at 1940 Westland Drive in Cleveland in 2010 to be the property for the proposed home. In addition to private donations, local and state appropriations total almost \$17 million.

“This is a monumental day as we are beginning to see the fruits of the labor of so many citizens, especially our veterans, who have worked very hard to bring this veterans’ home to Bradley County,” said State Senator Mike Bell. “This has been a grassroots effort and I am very humbled to be a part of such a worthwhile project.”

The Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans’ Home Groundbreaking Ceremony is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. (EDT) on Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 1960 Westland Drive in Cleveland.

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