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Construction Begins on the Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans' Home Gov. Lee Breaks Ground with Federal, State and Local Partners

CLEVELAND – Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Department of Veterans Services Commissioner Courtney Rogers and Ed Harries, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Veterans' Home Board, were joined by federal, state and local partners today as they broke ground on the new Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans' Home in Cleveland.

U.S. Rep. Scott Desjarlais (R-TN), U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), State Sen. Mike Bell (R-Riceville), State Sen. Todd Gardenhire (R-Chattanooga), State Rep. Dan Howell (R-Georgetown), State Rep. Mark Hall (R-Cleveland), Bradley County Mayor Gary Davis, Cleveland Mayor Kevin Brooks, Many-Bears Grinder, former Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services, staff from the Bradley County Veteran Services Office and community members participated in the groundbreaking celebration.

"We appreciate Tennessee's veterans and we have endless gratitude for their service to our country," said Lee. "We as a state are dedicated to supporting them throughout their lives and this is just one way we can give back to those who have given so much for us."

"Today has been sixteen years in the making and has required efforts of multiple generations of state and local administrations," said Rogers. "This new state veterans' home would not have come to fruition without the incredible support and tenacity of this community."

"Our Board and staff are eagerly awaiting the opening of the new Tennessee State Veteran's Home after many years of determined community effort," said Harries. "It is our privilege and our responsibility to provide exceptional care and support to those who honorably served our country. Soon we will be positioned to take care of the Heroes of Southeast Tennessee."

Construction will soon begin on the single-story 108-bed intermediate and skilled care nursing facility consisting of six 18-bedroom residential houses that will span 110,000 square feet. Construction is estimated to be complete by summer 2021.

Tennessee Lt. Gov. Randy McNally serves as the Vice-Chairman of the State Building Commission, which recently approved funding for the long-anticipated Bradley County project.

"Making sure those who served us in the armed forces receive the care they need is a moral imperative," said McNally. "I am thankful this outstanding new facility will be available for our veterans in Bradley County. I appreciate all those who worked to make this project a reality, especially my colleagues, Senator Mike Bell and Senator Todd Gardenhire."

Former Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett and Tennessee Department of General Services Commissioner Christi Branscom were some of the notable guests in attendance at today's event.

"We're extremely pleased to be managing the design and construction of this long-needed facility," said Branscom. "Our real estate division has been involved in this project since its inception and we look forward to continued close collaboration with our colleagues in the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services and with the Tennessee State Veterans' Home Board to ensure that this exciting project meets their needs for Tennessee's veterans."

Efforts have long been underway to locate a state veterans' home in Cleveland for the nearly 50,000 veterans who live in the six-county area.

"Sixteen years . . . that's how long it's taken to get to this point," said State Rep. Howell. "This groundbreaking ceremony is a testament to the courage, grit and perseverance of those who first had the vision of building a veterans' home to serve the thousands of veterans within a 50 mile radius of Cleveland. I'm honored to be a part of it."

The Bradley County Tennessee State Veterans' Home will be the fifth state-operated veterans' home in Tennessee.

"This veterans' home will be the "crown jewel" of southeast Tennessee – a complete teamwork of many individuals and organizations all working together for the good of our Veterans," said State Sen. Gardenhire.

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