

The Bandera PROPHEET

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VA schedules outreach event In Kerrville

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The Bandera Prophet

Veterans are eligible for a variety of benefits and services provided by the federal and state governments. But veterans often do not know of this eligibility or where to get useful information on what they may receive.

The Kerrville VA invites area veterans to an outreach event on Thursday, Oct. 26, at the Dietert Center, 451 Guadalupe Street, Kerrville. Personnel will be staffing information tables from 9 a.m. until noon.

The main focus of the outreach event is to provide information on healthcare needs. The Kerrville VA Medical Center is one component of the South Texas Veterans Health Care system headquartered in San Antonio.

Veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health care system can learn about their eligibility at this event. They should bring their DD-214 forms or other proof of military service. It is possible that they can apply for enrollment on the spot.

The VA, Dietert Center, and local veterans organizations are providing for light food and refreshments for veterans. This includes the regular lunch provided in the Friendship Cafe at the Dietert Center.

The Department of Veterans Affairs divides the VA into distinct quadrants.

Veterans receive health care through the Veterans Health Administration.

Benefits related to disability, pension, education, and home loan programs are handled by the Veterans Benefits Administration. Burials and military honors in a national cemetery comes under the National Cemetery Administration.

Local veterans service officers will also be available to assist veterans.

Service officers are not employees of the VA. They are employees of state or county veterans services offices or veterans service organizations. They assess veterans needs, provide answers to questions, and complete and submit benefit application forms for veterans.

Bandera County recently hired Mike Lauricella, U.S. Navy veteran, as its Veterans County Service Officer. He is located at 403 12th Street and can be reached at 830-460-1643. He takes appointments from Monday through Thursday.

The federal government began operations of a medical facility in Kerrville in 1923. The acquired a newly opened tuberculosis hospital and began serving a large population of World War I veterans.

A major renovation of facilities took place after World War II. The current six-story main building was constructed in 1947 and served a wide area.

In the early 1970s, the VA constructed the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Hospital in San Antonio to better serve the veterans in the south-central Texas area. This led to a shifting of services from Kerrville to San Antonio. But it is not true that the Kerrville VA is closed or is scheduled to be closed.

Almost everyone in Bandera refers to the Kerrville VA as the Kerrville VA Hospital. But it does not serve as a hospital any longer. There is no emergency care, urgent care, or acute care. The correct name is Kerrville VA Medical Center but it is hardly used by folks on the street.

Veterans are able to receive primary care and specialty care in Kerrville. A large number of veterans reside in the Community Living Centers at the Kerrville VA.

The VA also offers shuttle transportation for veterans wishing to receive care at Audie L. Murphy Memorial Hospital in San Antonio. The VA can also authorize care for veterans through Community Care. This allows veterans to receive care from a hometown provider through a VA network.

Younger veterans generally have an advantage with the use of computer technology for obtaining information. The VA provides a wealth of information at its website at va.gov. But many older veterans still enjoy getting out and meeting providers face-to-face. No matter the age, veterans are encouraged to use this opportunity to meet VA staff and other personnel at this rarely held outreach event.