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Gov. Heineman, Secretary Gale & Gen. Kadavy Encourage Students to 'Honor a Veteran'

Program promotes civics education by honoring local veterans

(Grand Island, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman, Secretary of State John Gale and Brig. Gen. Tim Kadavy, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard, today encouraged Nebraska middle school students to take time each year to honor veterans in their communities.

The 'Honor a Veteran' program was launched today during a visit to Grand Island's Barr Middle School. The program is modeled after a successful annual event at Barr Middle School commemorating Veterans Day, and is designed to enhance civics education by recognizing the contributions of local veterans.

As part of the Barr event, students provide the names of relatives or friends, either living or deceased, who have served in the military. Nominees are invited to attend the event where the names of servicemen and women are read as part of a special celebration.

The 'Honor a Veteran' program encourages middle schools to plan ceremonies that could include: the presentation of colors, the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, information on the history of Veterans Day, patriotic music, a keynote speaker, and a short video or slide show.

"As a WestPoint graduate and former Army Ranger, I appreciate the tradition developed here in Grand Island to show Nebraska veterans how much we appreciate the sacrifices they made," Gov. Heineman said. "Our service members are our parents, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters. The sacrifices made by those who serve in the armed forces and their families have helped preserve the good life we enjoy here in our state. I applaud Secretary Gale on the idea to involve Nebraska students in honoring veterans in their local community."

Gale said, "I have been so impressed by the Barr event that I want to encourage other Nebraska schools to hold similar events. The event becomes especially meaningful to the students since they have a connection with the veterans being honored."

Brig. Gen. Kadavy said, "We in the Nebraska National Guard are most appreciative of the efforts of Barr Middle School and the Secretary of State to recognize the accomplishments of our veterans. Since September 11, 2001, the Nebraska Guard has played an increasingly important role in our nation's defense, with nearly all of our 4,600 soldiers and airmen having served in Iraq or Afghanistan. It is imperative that we do not forget their sacrifices, or those of their predecessors, in ensuring our security and freedom."

The Secretary of State's Office and Barr Middle School have partnered to sponsor the 'Honor a Veteran' program. Schools interested in holding similar events can receive assistance,

including detailed event summaries, access to a speakers' bureau and help coordinating their own events. This year, Veterans Day is Tuesday, Nov. 11.

Schools interested in being part of the 'Honor a Veteran' program can contact Sharon Hambek in the Secretary of State's Office, at 402-471-6044 or sharon.hambek@sos.ne.gov, to begin planning their own event.

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