

## RACINE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

by Richard Bayer, Veterans Service Officer, Racine County Workforce Development Center



Racine County veterans looking for a way to access the benefits they've earned through their service are in luck. State law requires every County to have a Veterans Service Officer (VSO). The Racine County VSO is Richard Bayer. He and his assistant, Suzanne Hanrahan, are located in the Racine County Dennis Kornwolf Service Center, 1717 Taylor Avenue in Racine. Richard also holds office hours once a month at the Western Racine County Service Center, 380 McCanna Parkway in Burlington for the convenience of Veterans living in that area.

Richard and Suzanne have the job, one they consider a privilege, of providing Veterans and their families with the information and services they need to take advantage of the benefits that may be due them under Federal and Wisconsin state law. In 2007, over 2,200 people visited the Racine County Veterans Service Office for direction and assistance.

Richard and Suzanne helped them deal with the following issues:

- Healthcare services and payments
- Educational programs
- Death and Survivor issues
- Recording Veteran's Separation Papers
- Providing assistance for both Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities
- Graves Registration information
- Grave markers, grave flags, and flag holders

The Veterans Service Office also assists with reintegration programs for servicemen and women returning from areas of conflict. Often, this is the new Veterans' first look at the Veterans Administration and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, the organizations charged with providing all of the benefits and care programs. The County Veterans Service Office will often have the forms and connections necessary for Veterans to begin the process of developing the proper relationship with these agencies.

The Veterans Service Office also works with the Lead Veteran Employment Representative and the Disability Veteran Outreach Program staff to help Veterans find meaningful employment. Services offered may include helping Veterans improve their work skills and the quality of their resume. These people are housed in the same building, which is also the home of the County's Workforce Development Center. Racine County's Veterans can conveniently tap into the many services available in this incredible resource facility.

The Veterans Service Office is proud to provide assistance for both Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities. This year, Memorial Day will be celebrated on Monday, May 26. Many activities are planned throughout Racine County to remember those servicemen and women who have given their lives defending our freedom. Please make remembering them part of your holiday and please don't forget those who are in harms way at this moment.

If you have any questions that may be Veteran-related, please call 262-638-6667 (for Richard), or 262-638-6702 (for Suzanne). The Racine office is open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Richard also holds office hours in Burlington on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.