



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Smith County approved for one-of-a-kind Texas State Veterans Home

Long-term care facility for veterans first of its kind in Texas, will offer cottage-like setting

AUSTIN — Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Texas Veterans Land Board, joined state Representative Tommy Merritt today to announce Smith County will soon be home to a cutting-edge long-term care facility for Texas veterans.

“This veterans home embodies a revolutionary approach to long-term care that I’m proud to be able to bring to Texas veterans,” Patterson said. “We’re bringing the very best to Tyler. The Texas Veterans Land Board has now built seven of the finest long-term care facilities in Texas, but this home will be a cut above.”

The new Texas State Veterans Home will have a big impact, said Merritt, a strong advocate for locating a long-term care facility for veterans in northeast Texas.

“I commend Commissioner Jerry Patterson and the Veterans Land Board for their tireless efforts to work with me and legislators in northeast Texas and local officials to place a Texas State Veterans Home in the area,” Merritt said. “This is a tremendous benefit for the region and exemplifies the advantages of working together as a region. However, I am most appreciative of having the facility located in my district.”

Unlike previous Texas State Veterans Homes, the Smith County home will consist of 10 cottages and one common building. The design approach for each cottage focuses on drawing residents into social connection by mixing the best communal aspects of a home while still maintaining privacy and independence for residents.

An open kitchen, dining room and large table are at the heart of each of the 10 cottages. Family-style meals will be served at the table and residents can enjoy each other’s company afterward in a large living room with a fireplace. This hearth, or communal heart of the home, is what sets this Texas State Veterans Home apart from any other long-term care facility in Texas.

“The kitchen is the heart of any home, and the new Texas State Veterans Home we’re going to build in Smith County takes that into account,” said Patterson after the Texas Veterans Land Board voted unanimously to approve the project. “Instead of one large, hospital-like facility, this home will consist of a cluster of small cottages built to draw residents into family-like social connections around the dinner table.”

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A total of 10 private rooms, each with its own bathroom, will flank the hearth. Each cottage will be set up as a “non-lift” facility, where overhead tracks with slings in each resident’s room will provide safe transport of non-ambulatory residents from bed to bath.

“If this sounds like a Cadillac of a long-term care facility, it’s because it will be,” Patterson said. “Texas veterans deserve nothing less.”

The newest Texas State Veterans Home will be built on 20 acres donated by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. The donated land is just north of the Health Science Center, along the west side of Highway 155, just south of County Road 334.

“Our campus is very excited to work with the Texas Veterans Land Board in bringing this advanced facility to Texas,” said Dr. Kirk Calhoun, President of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. “This will complement the Health Science Center’s rural geriatric and community health activities in the region.”

The home will be built with a grant of about \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with the remaining 35 percent paid for by the Texas Veterans Land Board.

The new Texas State Veterans Home will join seven others across the state in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen and Temple.

In addition to voting approval of the new Texas State Veterans Home’s construction, the Texas Veterans Land Board also voted Thursday to hire Touchstone Communities to manage the facility.

Touchstone Communities, which has its headquarters in San Antonio, provides extensive health care services, including skilled-nursing care, assisted living, Alzheimer’s care and rehabilitative services. Touchstone already manages Texas State Veterans Homes in Amarillo, Bonham, Floresville and Temple.

Texas State Veterans Homes offer a broad spectrum of health care services, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and certified, secured Alzheimer’s units, each with its own secured outdoor courtyard.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Homes and special home, land and home improvement loans for Texas veterans, call 800-252-VETS (800-252-8387) or visit our Web site at www.texasveterans.com.

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