



news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2012

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Veteran Trauma Court to celebrate second graduating class *Up to 13 may be eligible to graduate May 3*

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – The Fourth Judicial District Veteran Trauma Court will mark a milestone Thursday, when up to 13 military veterans and active-duty personnel will graduate from the intensive monitoring and treatment program.

The graduation ceremony will begin at 4 p.m. Thursday, May 3, in Courtroom W350 (West Tower) of the El Paso County Judicial Building at 270 S. Tejon.

There are 82 veterans and active-duty personnel participating in the Veteran Trauma Court, a Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant-funded court modeled after other problem-solving courts such as drug and mental health courts. It offers eligible offenders an alternative to incarceration through treatment and counseling and regular court appearances. More than 100 veterans have appeared on the court's docket since the program began in December 2009.

“All the members of the Veteran Trauma Court team are proud to see so many participants celebrating completion of the program, and thrilled by its continued growth,” said District Judge Ronald Crowder, a retired Major General of the Army National Guard who presides over the court. “At all times, but especially at this point in our nation's history, it is important to recognize that many military veterans with service-related trauma disorders can

benefit from a court program that acknowledges their service and helps provide needed treatment.”

Most participants spend about 18 months in the program, which is open to veterans charged with a lower-level felony who have been diagnosed with a trauma-spectrum disorder related to military service. They also must exhibit a willingness to actively participate in treatment and recovery and fully cooperate with the court.

Similar to other problem-solving courts in Colorado, the Fourth Judicial District (El Paso and Teller counties) Veteran Trauma Court is a collaborative effort among various agencies. The core of the team includes the justice-related agencies in the judicial district, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, the Colorado Public Defenders Office, El Pomar Foundation, AspenPointe (formerly Pikes Peak Behavioral Health Group), University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health.

For more information, contact Veteran Trauma Court Program Manager Carrie Bailey, 719-637-8957, or Lead Peer Mentor/Navigator Rich Lindsey, 719-377-0474.

Editor’s Note: Any news media organizations wishing to record audio and/or video, or take still photographs, of the proceedings must receive prior approval from Judge Crowder, and participants will have the choice to decline to be taped or photographed. Click [here](#) for rules governing expanded media coverage, as well as an application form.