

JLC Position Paper
Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To fund the opening and operation of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery.

2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - The 2006 General Assembly authorized the construction of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (SWVVC), acceptance of donated land, and acceptance of federal grant funding.
 - The U.S. Army donated 80 acres adjacent to the Radford Army Ammunition Plant in Dublin.
 - Virginia was awarded a \$7.2 million federal grant to design, build, and equip the cemetery.
 - Design work is complete; a groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for October 19, 2009.
 - Construction will last approximately 12 months; the cemetery will open in fall 2010.

3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - To open a new veterans cemetery, key staff must be hired 6-12 months ahead of time in order to conduct training, purchase equipment, and prepare the cemetery for full operation.
 - The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) estimates that \$45,000 - \$50,000 will be needed in FY10 to hire key staff and perform essential pre-opening activities.
 - Approximately \$300,000 per year is required in FY11 and ongoing.
 - DVS expects the SWVVC to perform approximately 50 – 75 burials the first full year of operation, growing by approximately 25 burials per year to a level of 200 burials per year.
 - Operations at the state veterans cemeteries in Amelia and Suffolk are funded by the General Fund (approximately 70%) and Non-General Fund (approximately 30%).
 - Because the Dublin cemetery will perform fewer burials the first few years, it will initially need a greater percentage of General Fund support: 90 to 95% per year for the first three years.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly provide \$40,000 in FY10 to open and \$300,000 in FY11 and ongoing to operate the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery.