

## East Tennessee Veterans Nursing Home A Reality

It's hard to believe, but the new East Tennessee Veterans Nursing Home is almost complete! The long-awaited nursing home, located off Pellissippi Parkway on Coward Mill Road, will serve more than 114,000 East Tennessee veterans, who make up more than 40% of the state's total veteran population. The home will offer 140 beds, with 20 allocated to Alzheimer patients. Due to the overwhelming interest of veterans to sign up for the home, there is a waiting list for admission — proof that interest in a veterans nursing home is not new and that such a facility is long overdue.

In 2002, Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale began discussions with retired veterans and members of the congressional delegation regarding the possibility of locating a state veterans nursing home in East Tennessee. The federal formula for becoming a designated nursing home site requires that the state allocate 35% of the cost while the federal government appropriates the remaining 65% of the funds. Thus, in the 2003 budget, Mayor Ragsdale successfully rallied the support of the Knox County Commission to appropriate the \$6 million necessary to cover the state's portion of the funding for the federal designation.



Additionally, Knox County identified county-owned property to transfer to the state for this project.

In January 2004, the Mayor's Office was notified that Knoxville had been designated the site for the new veterans nursing home. That same month, Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr. announced the allocation of more than \$10.6 million in federal funds for the construction of the new nursing home in Knox County.

The East Tennessee Veterans Nursing Home is an example of what can be accomplished when the community rallies together and all levels of government work together. The groundbreaking on March 30, 2005, was an opportunity for many veterans and their families to celebrate — along with Congressman Duncan, Governor Bredesen, and Mayor Ragsdale — the hard work that was put into making this nursing home a reality.

**This October  
will be a very  
special time  
for all of East  
Tennessee as this  
great facility is  
opened to serve  
those veterans  
in our  
community who  
have so bravely  
served us.**