



**Department of
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News Release

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Secretary Shinseki Announces Over \$153 Million for Biloxi *Six Contracts Improve, Expand Health Care Services*

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced six contracts have been awarded worth \$153.7 million to build new health care facilities and expand existing services that provide care to Veterans in the Biloxi, Miss., area.

“Rebuilding VA’s resources within the Gulfport-Biloxi area is a top priority,” Secretary Shinseki said, “These contracts will allow us to provide our Veterans with quality health care, expand our services and stimulate the region’s economy.”

The projects, which include an addition to the medical center, new mental health facility, blind rehabilitation center, extended-care facility, parking garage and utility upgrades, are the result of a Department-wide reorganization of VA’s health care resources and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The most recent contracts include construction of a four-story clinical addition to the Biloxi VA Medical Center and a new 26-bed rehabilitation facility to train sight-impaired Veterans in the skills for independent living.

The addition will be connected to the existing hospital and provide space for outpatient surgery, a step-down unit, as well as primary and specialty care clinics. The \$36.6 million contract was awarded to Hoar Construction of Birmingham, Ala., and was part of an earlier plan to consolidate Gulfport services with Biloxi.

The rehabilitation unit is a stand-alone facility to be built on the Biloxi campus by Brasfield & Gorrie LLC, also of Birmingham, at a cost of \$14 million. Plans include separate space for training Veterans in skills needed for independent living.

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Biloxi Contracts 2/2/2/2

A new parking garage, surface parking and the associated site work to improve access to the Biloxi campus and its new buildings and services are being constructed under a \$12.4 million contract awarded to EASC/LS, a joint venture from Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Sustainable design components for the nearly 98,000-square-foot facility include using recovered materials, reducing waste and improving energy efficiency. The architectural design of the building is intended to preserve the historic beauty of the Biloxi campus. The anticipated completion date for construction of the new mental health facility is June 2011.

A separate project will improve the campus infrastructure to support the new additions, including expansion of the chilled water and steam plants and their distribution systems and upgrading the electrical system. Whitesell-Green Inc./ Batten & Shaw Inc. from Pensacola, Fla., will perform the work under an \$18.7 million contract.

In January 2009, a contract for more than \$35.4 million was awarded to Carothers Construction Inc. of Water Valley, Miss., to build an extended care facility on the campus of the VA medical center. The 105,000-square-foot facility will provide 96 inpatient beds for Veterans' care. Site work also includes surface parking, relocating underground utilities, roadwork and landscaping.

The first contract for \$36.3 million was awarded to Roy Anderson Corp. of Gulfport, Miss., in September 2008 to construct a new two-story, mental health facility that will house outpatient mental health care and 64 beds for inpatient mental health care.

In 2008, VA spent more than \$1.1 billion in Mississippi on behalf of the state's 212,000 Veterans. In addition to the Gulfport-Biloxi facilities, VA operates a major medical center in Jackson, plus nine outpatient clinics, two Vet Centers and three national cemeteries in Mississippi.