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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VA Black Hills Health Care System Preparing to Host 2006 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System will host the 2006 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Rapid City next month. It is the first time the national event has ever been held in South Dakota.

The Festival, which takes place October 16-22, is the culmination of a year-long fine arts and talent competition open to all veterans receiving care at VA medical facilities. Four Black Hills veterans will join 106 other veterans from across the country who earned an invitation to this national event.

"Our medical center staff and volunteers from around the Black Hills area have been busy planning and preparing for this event," said Peter Henry, Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System. "During the Festival week veterans will participate in a number of rehearsals, workshops, recreational and educational activities. I believe our Black Hills team has planned an event that will be a memorable experience for these talented veterans."

Dozens of VA employees from the two VA medical center campuses in Hot Springs and Ft. Meade have been working for months to prepare for the event, volunteering time to organize workshops, arrange for hotel rooms and area tours, plan the opening and closing ceremonies, make arrangements for the art exhibit and stage show, and numerous other activities needed to host the 2006 national event. This marks the 18th year of the program, which is co-presented each year by VA, Help Hospitalized Veterans and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The week culminates with a visual art exhibit and a gala variety stage show at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Fine Arts Theatre and Lobby on Sunday, October 22. The art exhibit begins at 12:30 p.m. with the stage show performance immediately following at 2:00 p.m. To reserve tickets free of charge, contact the ticket information office at (605) 720-7100.

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For further information about the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival contact:
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