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## Veterans Services reaching into Linn County communities

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — New Linn County Veterans Services officer Dee Baley-Hyder has one key job goal: To help local veterans of all ages get the benefits they were promised when they enlisted in the military.

Although she started her new job in July, Baley-Hyder is not new to the Veterans Services office, working for six years under Kim Grooms, who retired.

“This job means the world to me,” Baley-Hyder said. “It is such a privilege to work with our veterans who served our country.”

Baley-Hyder grew up in Lebanon and graduated from East Linn Christian Academy in 1993.

She worked at the Lebanon Walmart pharmacy for seven years, at Ray’s IGA and then the Corvallis Clinic before starting as an office specialist with Veterans Services in 2015.

“It’s amazing the stories our veterans can tell, although they usually don’t want to talk about it,” Baley-Hyder said. “Our whole reason for being is to help them get the benefits they deserve, they are entitled to and not just for them, but their family members as well.”

Baley-Hyder said the role of a good leader is to show her coworkers — assistant services officer Rob McKibben and office specialist Lindsey Hart — how they can best serve others by being a team.

Baley-Hyder said Veterans Services has purchased a new vehicle and is having it lettered so anywhere staff members go, people can see what they do. It might encourage a veteran to ask a question simply because they saw the vehicle parked somewhere.

“We hope to be more visible in our communities,” Baley-Hyder said. “We will gladly come speak at nursing homes or at civic group meetings. We want to participate in more community events throughout the county.”

Baley-Hyder said Veterans Services is also advertising locally.

Linn County has a list of about 9,000 veterans, but Baley-Hyder said there has to be more veterans



Linn County Veterans Services staff members Lindsey Hart, office specialist, Rob McKibben, assistant service officer, and Dee Baley-Hyder, service officer, are reaching out to veterans throughout the county, letting them know about the benefits to which they are entitled.

### How can Linn County Veterans Services help?

- Claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Compensation for service-related disabilities
- Pensions for non-service-connected disabilities
- Medical treatment at a VA clinic or hospital

than that.

“So many of our veterans don’t know they have a voice or someone to help them,” Baley-Hyder said. “They don’t realized their hearing loss stems from them serving on the deck of an aircraft carrier. They did their job and came home.”

Baley-Hyder said it’s important to her that the office work more closely with Linn County Mental Health to provide support for veterans who may be contemplating suicide.

“We need to be able to offer them face-to-face support when they need it,” she said.

Baley-Hyder and her husband Jason have seven children, ranging in age from 18 to 27.

They live in Albany and enjoy working on their 1965 Mustang and having family barbecues.

“I want our veterans to give us a call so we can thank them for their service,” Baley-Hyder said.

The Veterans Services office is at 330 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SW and is open from 8:30 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Call 541-967-3882 or 800-319-3882.