



*(December 22, 2015)*

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

**Alma L. Lee**

National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing: NVAC Safety Conference ~ February, 2016**

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As previously reported in President's Briefing dated December 16, 2015, the NVAC will be conducting a Safety Conference. The Conference will be held at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas from February 23<sup>rd</sup> through February 25, 2016, with travel dates of February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

Safety is a matter of paramount importance to all employees and it is crucial that the Locals have effective Safety Representatives. The best way to ensure this is to provide representatives with training and other tools to perform this crucial mission.

**We are recommending that you register for the conference as soon as possible. A copy of the agenda is provided.**

As you may know, the Department and the NVAC jointly held Safety Conference in Las Vegas for almost 20 years. However, after the 2008 Conference, management unilaterally withdrew their support for these events. We were forced to file a national grievance based on this action, and as part of a settlement of this grievance, management again agreed to support the conference. On a number of occasions in 2013 and 2014, we begin preliminary planning for a Safety Conference, only to have management withdraw its support.

We established a plan to conduct the conference in Las Vegas in February, 2016. In early December, 2015 management agreed to support the conference ONLY if it was moved to Phoenix, Arizona. However, by that time NVAC was already fully committed to the Las Vegas event and unable to move it. This action is a direct violation of the Master Agreement.

Management has notified Human Resources to disallow use of official time for attendance at the event as they previously agreed to. We have filed a grievance to address this violation and are continuing to try to solve this problem. We are recommending that you use annual leave to attend the conference with the expectation that the time will be restored once the grievance is settled.

While we have sufficient slots within the conference for both the safety officers and the Local Presidents to attend, we have agreed to open up the conference to non NVAC local officers and other unions, after January 1, 2016. We therefore recommend that you register prior to this date, in order to ensure a spot in the conference.

We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas in February!