VET BENEFIT OVERVIEW

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a new education benefit for those who served on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Recent revisions have expanded eligibility for tens of thousands of veterans, increased the range of programs and simplified tuition and fee payments. A few highlights of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill: It now pays for all tuition and fees for in-state students at public schools, and it also now offers allowances for housing, books, supplies and relocation from rural areas. Additionally, the Post-9/11 GI Bill may also be used for apprenticeships, on-the-job training and non-college degree programs.

Other programs to help veterans attain higher education include:

- The Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty program provides qualified veterans with up to 36 months of education benefits. It may be used for college, technical or vocational courses, correspondence courses, apprenticeships and on-the-job training, flight training, high-tech training, licensing and certification tests, entrepreneurship training and certain entrance examinations. In most cases, benefits are payable for 10 years following release from active duty.

- The Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve benefits qualified members of the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and the Army National Guard and Air National Guard. The program may be used for degree programs, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeships and on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs. Up to 36 months of education benefits may be available.

- The Reserve Educational Assistance Program benefits members of Reserve components who were called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency declared by the president or congress. REAP provides education benefits or increased benefits for certain reservists activated for at least 90 days after Sept. 11, 2001.

- Survivors & Dependents Assistance is available for the children or spouses of veterans who meet certain eligibility requirements. This program offers up to 45 months of education benefits that may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeships or on-the-job training. It may also be used for correspondence courses for spouses.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance may be available for veterans deemed at least 20-percent disabled. It helps with tuition and books, and provides a monthly allotment based on the number of dependents.

For more information, call the Department of Veterans Affairs at 888.442.4551 or Polk State College at 863.297.1000.