

## **TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM**

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: **Veterans Lodge Holdings, Inc., a 501(c)3**

Brief Description of Background of Individual/Entity/Organization:

Veterans Lodge is an unprecedented and significant commitment to the present and future welfare of our veterans. It is a project never before undertaken by either public or private groups. Envision a community where veterans can come together to heal — both in mind and body — and take the important steps to realize a successful future. The Lodge will be a place where veterans become financially independent, physically sound and psychologically fit by creating a welcoming atmosphere, free of judgment replete with inspiration and opportunity. The primary focus will be on veteran's abilities, not disabilities. It will serve as an icon for others to follow in both private and public partnerships. It will be a place where veterans know their wounds — whether visible or invisible — are a symbol of their courage and sacrifice. We will help veterans get their lives back by providing them with enriching therapy, abundant education alternatives and a strong sense of community. Our ultimate goal is to create a network of Veterans Lodge locations across the United States in areas with high concentrations of servicemen and women.

Primary Contact Information: Julie Smith

Title: CEO/Founder

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Executive Bios:

### **Julie Connell Smith, *Founder and CEO***

Julie's professional career was comprised of brokering the selling and purchasing of large tracts of land between some of the largest purchasers in the United States. Personal experiences with wounded veterans inspired her to create a place of love, healing, and support for servicemen and women and their families, that became Julie Smith's personal mission and life passion. For the last several years, Julie has turned her boundless energy and relentless efforts towards aiding returning and retired veterans. She conceived Veterans Lodge as an environment where veterans can safely begin transitioning back to civilian life.

### **Tony Dorsey, *CFO***

Anthony W. "Tony" Dorsey, C.P.A., P.A., graduated from the University of Georgia where he received his degree in accounting. He maintains a practice in Tallahassee and has provided a wide array of accounting services, including extensive work for not-for-profits, for over 44 years. A member of both the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Dorsey has served as an expert witness in both federal and state court. Additionally, Tony has served on the boards of Goodwill Industries, his local YMCA, and as a non-lawyer on the Florida Bar Grievance Committee. For over seven years Dorsey has volunteered his services, valued at upwards of \$250,000, to Veteran's Lodge. His affinity for the project stems from his father and uncles having served in WWII.

### **Kirk J. Mauro, M.D., *Chief Medical Director***

Dr. Mauro received his undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. He is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. He also holds certifications from the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners and the American Academy of Disability Evaluating Physicians. He was awarded Medical Director of the year in 1995 by HealthSouth Corporation and Most Valuable Physician in 2005 by PainCare, Inc. He is currently the Director of Medical Rehabilitation Specialists in Tallahassee, FL, where his services include EMG/NCV's, independent medical evaluations, medical-legal consultations and treatment for both office and hospital patients. Dr. Mauro has privileges at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, Capital Regional Medical Center, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital and Select Specialty Care Hospital. He is currently in private practice and has served or is currently serving as a director for several major healthcare providers.

Additional executive team members are currently being assessed.

Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities in Veterans Lodge include Brasfield & Gorrie (Construction), Barclay Group (Developer), Merrill Pastor & Colgan (Architect), EDSA (Land Planner), JP Engineering (Civil Engineer), Additional organizations will include the Emerald Coast Technical College and Lecom Dental College and other local, state and federal entities.

## **VETERANS LODGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Veteran's Lodge is a subsidiary of Veterans Holding, Inc., a 501(c)3, and is committed to honoring and empowering veterans. Our goal is to ensure that all veterans get the best treatment and rehabilitation possible so that they may become the most successful and well-adjusted in our nation's history. Our mission is to provide a healthy environment in a serene setting where veterans and their families can come to rehabilitate through predictive health, innovative education, and transformational research. Veteran's Lodge aims to provide the following:

- Patient Rehabilitation
- Post-secondary education
- Job training for specific skills requested by affiliated employers
- Cutting edge research and development for frontal head injury and PTSD
- Lessening the burden on the government through private institutions
- Temporary (up to 6 months) housing
- Long term wellness care
- Holistic family therapy

Our growing veteran population is returning home to find a nation that has turned a blind eye to their needs. For many, the battle is not over when service to country ends. Three out of every four soldiers have been exposed to some type of blast trauma and intense combat situation, making it increasingly hard to decompress and rejoin civilian life. The stress of everyday life continues to take its toll, making the transition from military life extremely difficult, if not impossible. Uncertain economic times have further compounded the problem. Homelessness is on the rise. Suicide rates increased 80 percent from 2004 to 2008. There are 2.4 million Gulf War II Era veterans and the unemployment rate among those ages 18 to 24 is 29 percent. By 2020, the number of Veterans is expected to increase by 1.2 million. Last year alone the suicide rate among our veterans rose 37% and our nation's resources continue to be pushed to the brink. **This is where the Veteran's Lodge steps in.**

### **A Healing Place**

When Veterans return from service, often after multiple tours of duty, they enter their communities hoping to become part of the skilled workforce and a source of civic leadership. According to local economic experts, veterans have been and continue to be a vital component in developing Northwest Florida's economy. In a recent NW FL Daily News article, former Florida State Senator Don Gaetz stated "You get the kind of economic development that is supported by the infrastructure you have. In Northwest Florida, the human capital in veterans is definitely part of that infrastructure." The Veterans Lodge will provide veterans returning to Northwest Florida as well as existing retired veterans a setting to receive much-needed emotional counseling, transitional assistance, job training programs, business services, rehabilitation and long-term wellness care. Serving as a model not-for-profit human humanitarian project, it can be duplicated throughout the United States.

### **Location**

Our Flagship Lodge will be located on a 400+ acre tract in close proximity to military bases, medical facilities and educational institutions. After strategic review, our flagship site has been placed in DeFuniak Springs, Florida (a RAEO) and will serve the needs of all Northwest Florida veterans. There are 21 military bases in the state of Florida and Northwest Florida is home to a significant concentration of Air Force and Navy installations, including Naval Air Station Pensacola, Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Naval Support Activity Panama City, Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field and Tyndall Air Force Base. This site will ensure that our first Lodge will be able to provide services that are geographically convenient to Veterans, as well as have strong community backing.

### **Phase One/Timeline**

Veterans Lodge Holdings currently has a 1386+/- acre tract located at the intersection of I-10 and U.S. Highway 331 under contract and has successfully completed the due diligence phase. Closing on the land tract is anticipated in late November or early December 2017 (exact date TBD). Veterans Lodge will begin clearing land in January 2018 and has extensive construction budgets, architectural designs as well as land planning complete. Veterans Lodge expects to create substantial construction jobs as well as jobs in rehabilitation, memory care, educational and technical services and more.

Of major importance, a public infrastructure connector road of approximately 1.74+/- miles has been approved for construction between U.S Highway 331 and Highway 280A and initial funding in the amount of \$1.5 million has been secured from the Florida State Legislature. Walton County has received confirmation of the \$1.5M appropriation and has

submitted a County incentive grant to match the funds at \$1.5M that has been approved and is programmed in FDOT's 2020 budget. The current property owner and Veterans Lodge have both executed right-of-way property donation agreements with the Florida Department of Transportation. This new road is slated for construction possibly as early as 2018 and will benefit all the citizens of Walton County by relieving congestion on U.S. Highway 331 and providing a much-needed emergency response route for citizens seeking medical care, fire, rescue and other emergency response situations from Highway 280A and the surrounding communities. Construction on the flagship site will begin as soon as necessary permits (in progress) have been obtained; however, the City of Defuniak Springs has provided a letter of approval for immediate development for the initial 400 acre flagship site for all features including a Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center, Memory Care and Assisted Living, the Veterans Lodges and housing units, an education center for technical education services, an Amphitheatre for events, a Chapel, and commercial food services. Affordable housing and cabins will be interwoven with recreational areas including a ropes/challenge course, equestrian area, meadows, gardens/orchards and conservation areas. The design of Veterans Lodge will incorporate all appropriate and sustainable aspects of environmental usage. Master plan prototype link: <https://veteranslodge.org//files/masterPlan.jpg>

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

The Lodge is actively working with a major healthcare provider and management service, as well as universities in the southeast including the University of West Florida, the College of Northwest Florida, Florida State University and Lecom School of Dental Medicine to develop comprehensive medical treatments and rehabilitation programs. Lecom, located in Defuniak Springs, FL will occupy an administrative building and hire personnel/guidance counselors to guide veterans with GI benefits, policies and procedures for entrance to Lecom. Lecom will accept veterans benefits and in many cases will reduce the remainder of fees. The Veterans Lodge will provide financial and other assistance to veterans enrolled in the various Lecom programs and has an agreement with Lecom to provide much needed housing for their students. Additionally, Veterans Lodge will create specific programs for workforce integration with Emerald Coast Technical College and Career Source.

### **Lodge Description**

Each Lodge will include a state of the art health care facility, counseling and rehabilitation services, recreation and educational programs, job training and family housing. Working with the VA, researchers and local hospitals, programs will be continually updated to deliver the best care — with the ultimate goal of returning our Veterans to active and productive civilian life. We believe each lodge can successfully treat as many as 300 Veterans on an ongoing basis. Some will be housed full time while others will commute to receive treatment and training.

### **Job Training – Emerald Coast Technical College and Career Source**

Workforce and reintegration training is critical to veteran rehabilitation. It is directly related to self-worth and the ability to provide for themselves and their family. While many learn real-life professions while on duty, a large number do not. Therefore, it is vital that we offer true vocational training with marketable skills. Collaboration with companies who seek to hire Veterans will be an integral part of the training process. The Emerald Coast Technical College will occupy the Education Center and provide onsite training to veterans (including previously incarcerated veterans in cooperation with the Walton County Sheriff's Office). The Veterans Lodge will also work with Career Source and provide grants to support programs that provide veterans throughout NW Florida with transferable, sustainable workforce skills.

### **Rehabilitation and Research Facility**

A state-of-the-art Brain Injury Rehabilitation and Research Center is essential assuring Veterans will have the necessary resources and medical treatment for physical therapy and rehabilitation services. The focus will be on cutting edge research in PTSD, brain traumas, stroke wellness therapy and Neurolinguistic/Neurocognitive research and treatments. Team members chosen to staff and operate this facility have already received the prestigious Christopher Reeve's Foundation "Quality of Life Grant" award for their studies and research in this field. The rehab center will provide: Physical Therapy, Recreational Therapy (running, golf, swimming), Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Audiology, Vision impairment rehabilitation and a Hyperbaric Treatment Center.

### **Key Insights from Veterans Lodge Market Assessment and Feasibility Study**

A detailed market assessment and feasibility study of the Veterans Lodge project was completed by Sage Age Strategies, a Florida-based economic consulting firm (consultants Malissa Illiano, MBA, Senior Consultant, and William McClain, MBA, Senior Branding & Communications Strategist). The following summary of the results indicates that a very positive opportunity exists for Veterans Lodge. The research was based on the methodology below:

\*Web-based research including statistical and demographic data on veterans, payer information, regional health care providers, regional military bases, number of active duty personnel and health service innovations.

\*Discussions with key sources of influence within the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA Health Care System.

\*Meetings with VA and non-VA healthcare providers across the defined 125-mile market region to review the Veterans Lodge concept, ascertain provider perceptions of the need, gather their feedback and input on programmatic components, and measure their level of interest in, and commitment to, referring appropriate patients to the planned Veterans Lodge.

Conversations with key information sources included, but were not limited to: Steve Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (ret.), Communications Director at the Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Robert M. Horton, Jr., Public Information Officer, Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs; VA Outpatient Clinics; VA County Service Centers; Heather Cave, Manager, Military and Defense Programs, Enterprise Florida, Inc.; the Public Affairs Officers at all active duty military bases in the market region; and Rod Lewis, Ph.D., at the DOD-contracted Haas Center for Business Research, at the University of West Florida. Meeting with Key Leaders at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare:

Meetings attended by Col. Mike Prendergast, US Army (ret.), Executive Director of the Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Mark O'Bryant, President and CEO, Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, Ms. Paula Fortunas, President of the Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare Foundation, Mr. Jacob Vanlandingham, Ph.D., President of Prevacus (head trauma research) and others

Meeting with Eglin Air Force Base Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic: Meeting attended by Mr. Robert (Robb) Rennie, DAFC, FACHE, Director Growth Management/Senior Civilian Liaison and Ms. Shirley Richmann, BSN, RN

Meeting at Pensacola VAOPC: Meeting attended by Mr. Jerron Barnett, VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System PublicAffairs Officer and Ms. Kellee R. Bivens, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist.

Meeting with Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast: Meeting attended by Mr. Roger Hall, Hospital CEO, Mr. Gus Andrews.

### **Veterans Lodge Regional Market Demand Analysis**

There was found to be an estimated 13,695 veterans and/or active duty servicemen and women in the market region who could benefit from the care and support services such as those planned for the Veterans Lodge project. Assuming the Veterans Lodge will treat an average of 175 patients per day with each patient being required to receive at least six treatments, the total demand that would be required annually for the project would be 63,875 visits, or approximately 10,646 veterans in need.

The above demand represents a total need for nearly 13,700 veterans, which would equate to more than 82,000 annual visits, demonstrating a more than adequate market to support the project.

### **Key Referral Sources and Support**

Meetings with potential referral sources for Veterans Lodge, including VA clinics, the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System and community hospitals (Healthmark, Sacred Heart and Tallahassee Memorial), were both positive and productive. Representatives of these institutions unanimously expressed their enthusiasm for the project and the need it would fill within the VA's current continuum of care. Based on the interviews conducted, all key entities appear willing and able to support the Veterans Lodge project as key sources of patient referral.

### **Executive Recommendation**

It was recommended that the Veterans Lodge project proceed with confidence based on the following findings:

Data gathered from the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense (via the University of West Florida's Haas Business Research Center) indicates that sufficient numbers of prospective patients exist for the Veterans Lodge project to achieve its required volumes.

The leadership of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System has expressed their enthusiastic support of the Veterans Lodge project.

Healthcare providers in the region, including both VA and community based health facilities, have expressed their support for the project and indicate they would refer appropriate outpatients to the proposed site.

Veterans Lodge currently holds provider numbers for billing and reimbursement payments for both the VA Healthcare System and TRICARE, the insurance entity that serves our active duty military.

The results of the demand analysis confirm there are a sufficient number of potential patients in the defined market region for Veterans Lodge to achieve the target volumes required for successful operation.

Veterans Lodge has received the support of both Florida state and federal officials.

Phase One Project Costs include infrastructure (roads, water and sewer connecting to County), Administrative building for Veterans Lodge and Lecom Dental School, Education Center for Emerald Coast Technical College, and Housing Units for veterans and Lecom Dental School students: Total Phase One Costs: \$25,524,828.00

Funding Request being sought from Triumph Gulf Coast: \$10,209,931.00

Other Sources of Funds: \$45,790,494.00 (The Barclay Group, Palm Harbor, FL)

**Total Project Cost (all phases): \$56,000,425.00**

Thank you for your consideration.

