

# Foundation, CoBank support Hometown Veterans group

By Tim Velder, PRECorp Marketing Communications

Service to our country through military duty oftentimes requires the soldier to put aside personal and family concerns for the good of his and her fellow soldiers.

When these military veterans return home or make a new home, there are inherent challenges with picking up the mantle of civilian life. Some are physical, while others are financial, emotional, or social. There are many outreach and assistance programs available to veterans no matter how long it has been since they wore the uniform in defense of our country.

Since 2010, the Hometown Veterans organization from Gillette has been offering informational breakfasts and community outreach programs. Gillette Mayor Duane Evenson commissioned the idea in 2009 on the aforementioned ideals.

This group is a partnership between leaders of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, with the intent of bringing veterans of all eras together once a month to discuss issues of common interest.

It started out as a monthly morning breakfast and that remains the central point of the group. These breakfasts entail good food at the Campbell



Powder River Energy Foundation board president John Flocchini (center) greets two World War II veterans during a recent Hometown Veterans breakfast held in Gillette. Pictured are Navy veteran Bill Prell (left) and Army veteran Chet Haagensen (right). Both men fought in the Pacific during the war.

County Senior Center, but also food for thought regarding a range of issues related to veterans programs.

"It is also a time to solidify friendships, communicate, help each other, and hear about issues of importance to our veterans," said organizer Paul Woessner. Support for the breakfast program has been overwhelming and the costs of that event are now covered through a perpetual grant.

However, the veterans group has also ventured out into the community with school programs and education events working with area youth. The

programs include patriotic celebrations, sessions on flag etiquette and history, and discussions on the Constitution and freedom.

These activities are volunteer-driven, but there are ancillary costs associated with them including the purchase of educational materials and handouts.

In 2014, the Powder River Energy Foundation learned of the good things the Hometown Veterans group was doing and offered to help. During the 2014 Foundation Golf Tournament, \$5,000 was raised to help defray

**Continued on page 5.**





Photos by Tim Velder/PRECorp Marketing Communications

Powder River Energy Foundation board president John Flocchini (left) greets the Hometown Veterans group during its monthly breakfast in Gillette. Pictured with Flocchini are executive committee members from left, VFW Post 7756 Commander Donnell Nichols, American Legion Post 42 Commander Jerry Hight, Hometown Veterans Financial Officer Lee Yake, and Hometown Veterans Program Director Paul Woessner.

## Hometown Veterans...

from page 4.

some of the costs associated with the community outreach efforts. CoBank, a financial institution that lends to electric cooperatives including Powder River Energy, matched that \$5,000 through its "Sharing Success" charitable giving program.

With the two significant donations, Hometown Veterans and the PRECorp Foundation will work together to bring more awareness of veterans issues to the members of Powder River Energy across northeast Wyoming.

In future issues of the WREN magazine and the PRECorp

News monthly insert, look for brief highlights of current veterans issues and events as well as opportunities for readers to help.

"This will help widen the reach of the Hometown Veterans group, while at the same time this relationship enables the Foundation to make a significant targeted impact with its giving program," said PRECorp COO/Deputy GM Les Penning.

For more information on Hometown Veterans go to [www.hometownveterans.org](http://www.hometownveterans.org), or contact: Paul Woessner at Hometown Veterans, PO Box 2316, Gillette, WY, 82717.

## If you go:

### Hometown Veterans monthly breakfasts

The monthly breakfasts are open to all area veterans. They are held at 8 a.m. on the last Tuesday of the month at the Campbell County Senior Citizens Center at 701 Stocktrail Avenue in Gillette.

Upcoming Hometown Veterans breakfast dates:

- Tuesday, March 31
- Tuesday, April 28
- Tuesday, May 26
- Tuesday, June 30
- Tuesday, July 28
- Tuesday, August 25
- Tuesday, September 29
- Tuesday, October 27
- Tuesday, November 24