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## Crow Wing County Appoints New Veterans Service Officer

Crow Wing County announces the appointment of Erik Flowers as the new Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to begin on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Flowers started working at Crow Wing County in 2007 as a Correctional Officer and was promoted to Sergeant at the Crow Wing County Jail in 2009.

Flowers has 10 years of military service with the Minnesota Army National Guard – 682<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Battalion where he specialized in Human Resources by preparing and monitoring all administrative processes for his unit and others. He was also given special assignments in the Recruitment and Sustainment Program to prepare new recruits for basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). During his deployment, Kosovo Force (KFOR-5) mission in 2003-04, Operations Joint Guardian, he held several special assignments. One most dear to him was his activities with the Chaplain and helping soldiers through some of the most difficult times in their lives.

“I have a passion and commitment to the service of others and I am honored to be able to serve our veterans, their families and dependents. It is a goal that every veteran we serve gets the help they need in their daily lives,” said newly appoint Veterans Service Officer Erik Flowers. “Our commitment and service will not stop when paperwork has been filed on a claim. We will continue to build collaborative working partnerships in the area so we can work together to best serve those that served their country.”

The goal of the VSO position is to assist veterans in accessing benefits from the VA that they have earned by their service. The position promotes and protects the rights of veterans and their families through education, communication and technology.

“Serving our veterans is extremely important to our county. We are so pleased to have Erik leading the services and outreach as the County’s Veterans Service Officer”, said County Board Chair, Rosemary Franzen. “As the MN guard takes great pride in shaping Minnesota’s history, in supporting federal and state objectives, Crow Wing County is also very proud of how the Veterans Services team has demonstrated their commitment to providing professional service to veterans and their families. We are thrilled to have Erik lead the team.”

Flowers has a BS in Business Management from Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota. Flowers has been a volunteer with the Brainerd Fire Department since 2016.

Flowers replaces Veterans Service Officer Bob Nelson who retires May 31<sup>st</sup>. Nelson served Veterans for 21 years. He was VSO in Aitkin County for 9 years before working with veterans in Crow Wing County beginning in 2007.

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**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.