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GREENE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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VISION

Greene County Veterans Service Agency is dedicated to providing the highest quality of service to the Veterans and their families.

MISSION

Our mission is to:

Educate Greene County Veterans and their families about the benefits they have earned

Represent and guide our Veterans in obtaining benefits and services both through the VA and other local agencies

Make our Veterans an economic force in education, employment and business development

SUMMARY

Our Agency provided services to 3948 veterans, veteran family members and veteran advocates in 2015. We have a staff of four full time employees, one per diem driver and one part time New York State Division of Veterans Affairs employee who represents Greene and Columbia county veterans from our office twice per week. All of our programs and services are provided directly through our agency.

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are approximately 890,000 veterans in New York State, and approximately 4500 veterans are estimated to live in Greene County. While Greene County's total population only represents 0.25% of the total estimated New York State population, our veterans represent nearly 1% of the total state population. Nearly 15% of Greene County veterans are receiving VA Disability Compensation for service-connected disability, or VA Disability Pension for nonservice-connected disabilities. Approximately 26% of our veterans are utilizing VA Healthcare.

2015 GOALS

- Increase Productivity
 - ✓ Streamlined veteran intake procedure
 - ✓ Decreased length of time to develop compensation and pension claims
 - ✓ Filed 13% more claims than 2014
 - ✓ Assisted 50% more veterans, family members and advocates than 2014
 - ✓ 7% Increase in veterans transported to VA medical facilities
- Obtain Wheelchair Accessible Van
 - We did not meet this goal for 2015, but will meet this goal in 2016
- Increase and improved Staffing to Meet Agency Demands
 - ✓ Hired part time Veterans Benefits Representative
 - ✓ Increased part time Veterans Benefits Representative position to full time

➤ 2015 GOALS (CON'T)

- ✓ Reclassified part time Chauffeur position to Veterans Services Driver
 - ✓ Increased part time Veterans Services Driver position to Full Time
 - ✓ Created full time Veterans Services Assistant which will be an accredited position.
 - ✓ Eliminated Senior Clerk position which did not fulfill the needs of this office
- Relocate Agency to More Functional Office Space
- ✓ Obtained office suite on same floor as new VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Greene Medical Arts Building
 - ✓ Assessed Agency needs and provided critical input for new office remodel
 - ✓ Packed and moved office in two days with minimal down time for clients

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

➤ VA Disability Compensation Claim Representation

- Represent veteran clients against the Department of Veterans Affairs in Disability Compensation claims
- Provide guidance to veterans obtaining necessary medical evidence
- Develop and submit each claim to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
- Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for rating or approval
- Interact with Congressional office to ensure all viable claims are accurately rated

➤ VA Educational Benefits

- Assist veterans in obtaining their Certificate of Eligibility for the GI Bill
- Assist eligible veterans' dependents in applying for Chapter 35 Survivor and Dependents Assistance for Education
- Advise veterans of potential education benefits for self and dependents
- Advise higher education institutions of CFR Title 38 Part III Chapters 30 through 36 regulations as necessary

➤ VA Pension Claim Representation

- Represent eligible wartime veteran clients or their surviving spouses in VA Disability Pension claims

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CON'T)

- Assist veteran, family members and advocates in obtaining necessary financial information
 - Assist same in obtaining necessary medical information
 - Develop and submit claims to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
 - Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for approval
- VA Healthcare and Enrollment
- Guide veterans through application process
 - Provide explanation of benefits
 - Assist veterans in disclosing their financials to the VA
 - Screen applicants for potential VA Disability Compensation claims
 - Assist veterans who were denied VA Healthcare
 - Help veterans navigate VA Healthcare benefits and billing
 - Advocate for veterans who are not receiving appropriate care at VA medical facilities
- County Veterans Transportation Program
- Provide daily (weekday) transportation for county veterans to VA medical facilities
 - Pick up and drop off veterans at their homes
 - Provide transportation as requested for disability compensation assistance

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CON'T)

- Transport veterans after hours or weekends for special events as requested
- Create and maintain eligibility requirements and standard operating procedure
- Ensure vehicles, staff, and services meet all federal, state and local standards
- Honor a Vet Ceremony
 - Hold two Honor a Vet Ceremonies each year
 - One memorial ceremony in May for a chosen deceased veteran
 - One Veteran of the Year Ceremony in November for the chosen living veteran
 - Supervise a nine member panel of committee members
 - Create and disseminate submission packets annually
 - Review and assess submissions for accuracy and eligibility
 - Coordinate with Buildings and Grounds, Sheriff's Department, Catskill Police Department, and Greene County Courthouse for location set up and traffic control.
 - Coordinate with local entertainers, clergy, and veterans service and other organizations to ensure each ceremony is tailored to the honoree and his/her local community
- Coordinate with Greene County Agencies and Departments

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CON'T)

- Assisted Human Services with 2015 Rosie the Riveter Event, providing transportation and driver for over 150 patrons of event
- Coordinated with Highway Department in placing Purple Heart County road signs at prominent county line borders
- Coordinated with Travel and Tourism to encourage local ski resorts to extend military discounts to area veterans
- Coordinate with County Clerk's office in obtaining and submitting veterans discharge documents
- Coordinate county's Return the Favor program, periodically canvassing local businesses to provide discounts to area veterans and/or update their existing offers with County Clerk's office who maintains accurate listing

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Personnel

GCVSA Director	4/11/2011 to present
Veterans Benefits Representative	1/25/2015 to 2/11/2016 (presently vacant)
Veterans Service Assistant	12/28/2015 to present
Senior Clerk	12/1/2010 to 8/28/2015
Veterans Service Driver – Full Time	10/11/2011 to present
Veterans Service Chauffeur – Per Diem	6/1/2014 to present
Honor a Veteran Committee Chairman (Volunteer)	1/1/2013 to present
NYS Division of Veterans Affairs Benefits Advisor (Part Time)	7/1/2011 to present

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

COMPARATIVE OPERATING EXPENSES

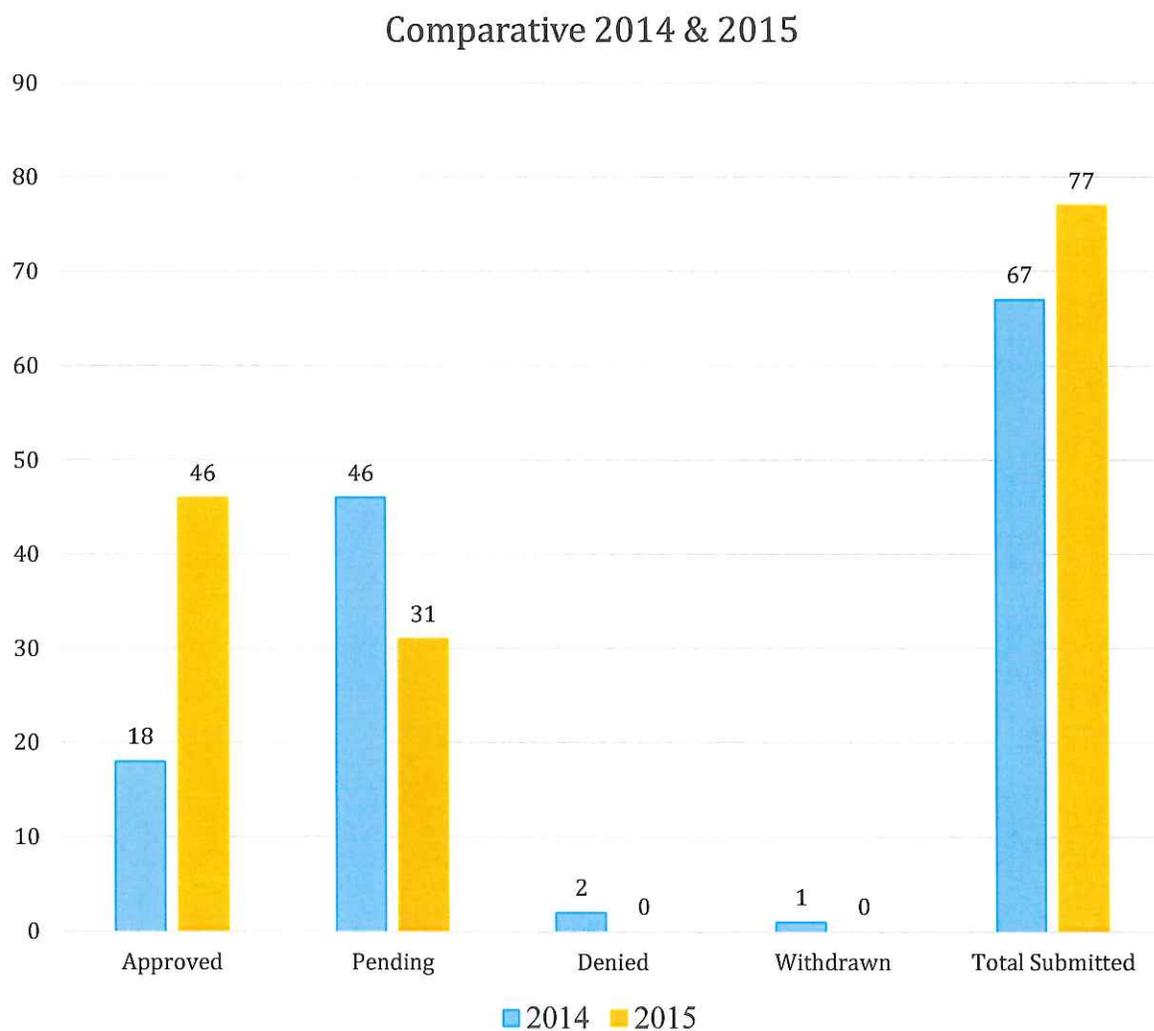
	2014	2015
Salaries	\$107,417.17	\$123,873.65
Rent	\$16,335.60	\$15,615.11
Office Supplies	\$1,990.24	\$3,428.50 *
Postage	\$288.71	\$283.42
Repairs	\$0.00	\$16,407.38 **
Travel	\$8,436.80	\$9,700.68
Employee Benefits	\$80,016.12	\$69,682.42
Events	\$377.89	\$375.45
Vehicle Insurance	\$1,757.83	\$2,414.75
Telephone	\$2,689.66	\$2,737.00
Total	\$219,310.02	\$244,518.36
NYS Reimbursement	\$8529.00	\$8529.00
Total Operating Expenses to County	\$210,781.02	\$235,989.36

* Office furniture included in total

** Construction for new office spaces

CLAIMS & BENEFITS

Greene County Veterans represented by American Legion Accredited Representative

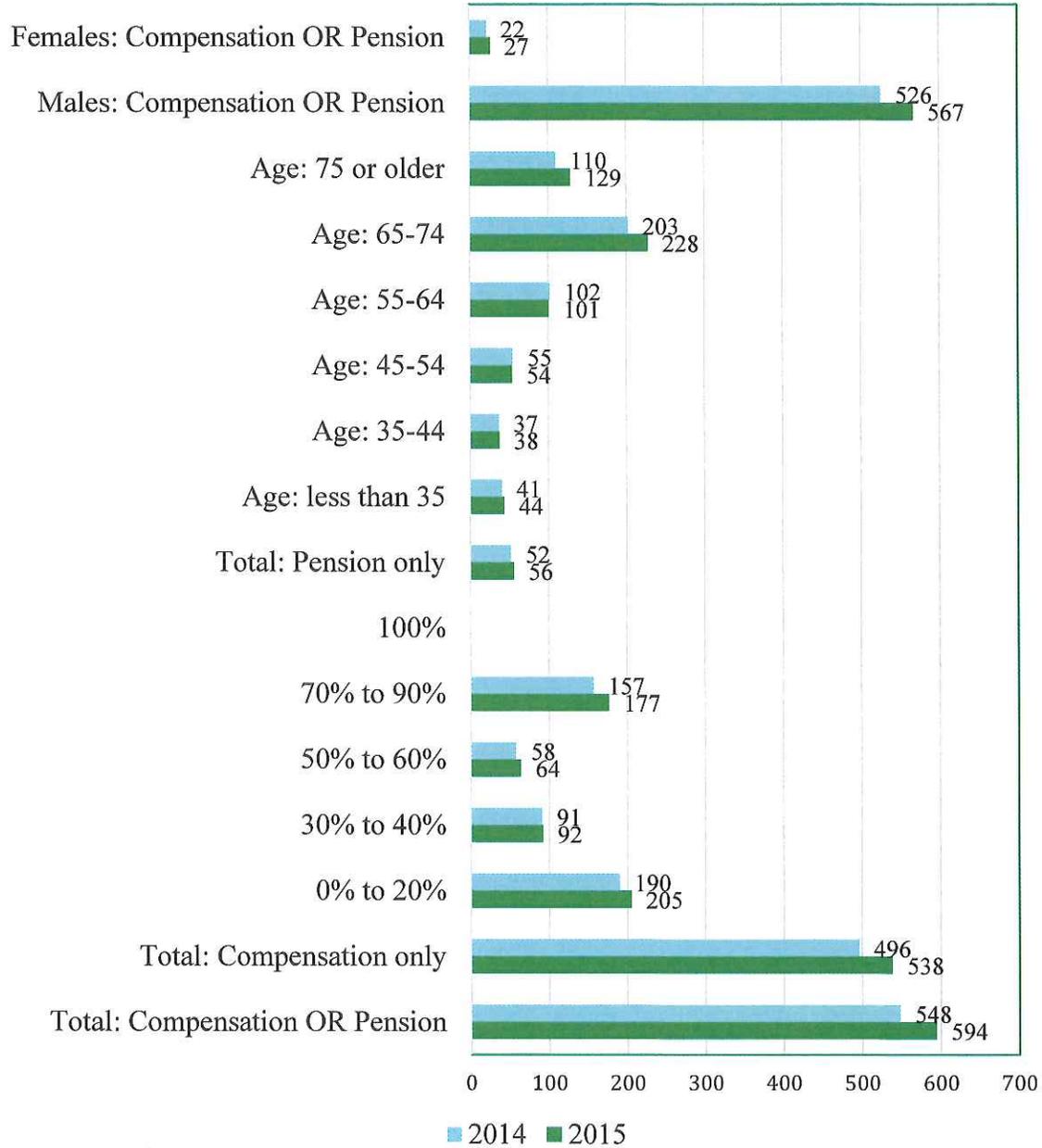


CLAIMS & BENEFITS (CON'T)

In 2015 the agency filed 13% more VA Disability Compensation and Pension claims than 2014. Of those claims, 61% have been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs for payment of benefits. Additionally, our New York State Division of Veterans Affairs (NYDVA) Veterans Benefits Representative filed 46 VA Disability Compensation and Pension claims, status unavailable. The total Agency and NYDVA claim count for 2015 which is not reflected in the graph above, is 123 claims. In 2014, our combined claim count was 96, an increase of 23% for both agencies. Additionally, the agency decreased the overall number of claims pending into subsequent years by 33%. No claims filed in 2014 were denied or withdrawn.

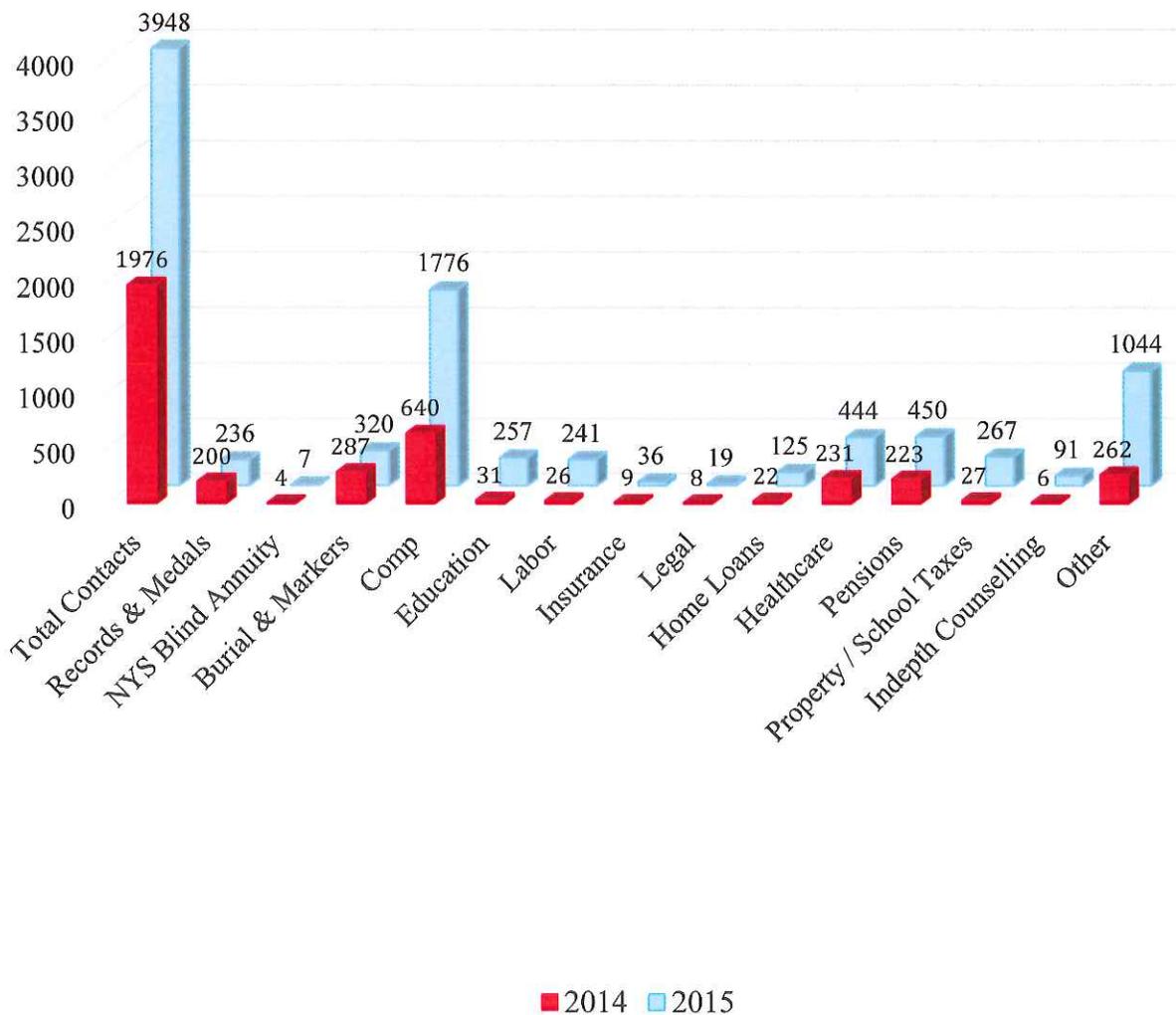
As of October 1, 2015, the agency saw a combined 8% increase in Greene County veterans receiving VA Disability Compensation and Pension. Please see figures in graph below for an in-depth analysis by age, gender, and disability percentage rates:

FY 14 & 15 COMPENSATION & PENSION GREENE COUNTY RECIPIENTS



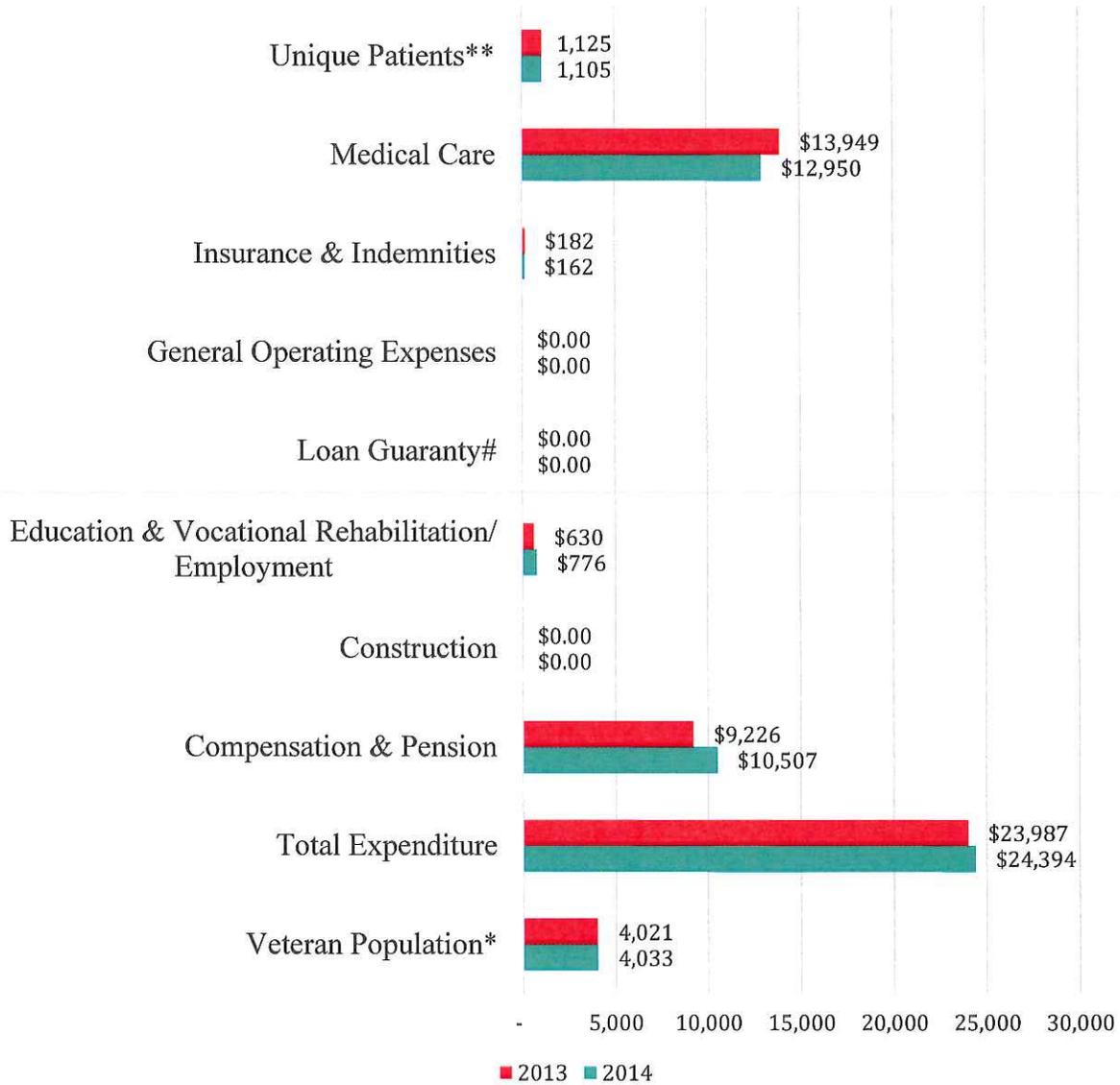
STATISTICAL REPORTS

CONTACTS & BENEFITS



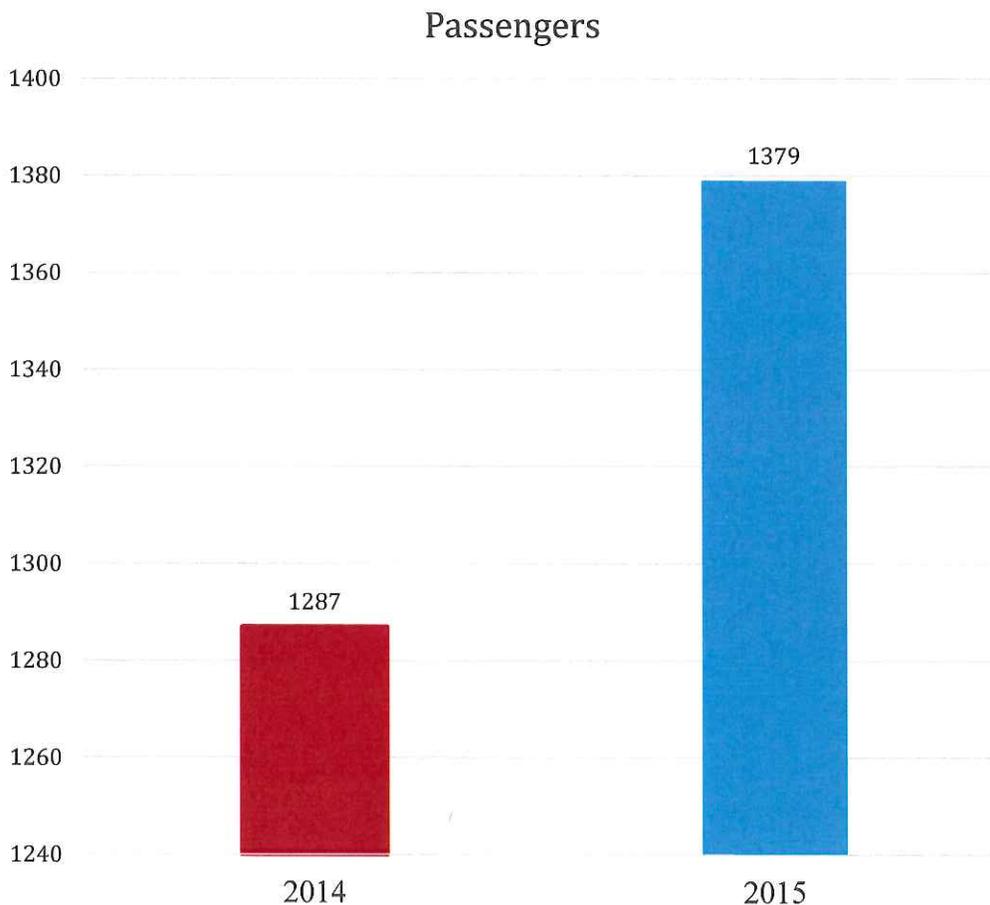
STATISTICAL REPORTS (CON'T)

FY 13 & 14 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES (in \$000s)



STATISTICAL REPORTS (CON'T)

TRANSPORTATION



Fleet of three vehicles: 2005 Ford E-Series Van, 2006 Ford Focus, 2010 Chevy Van. Our overall transportation service increased by 7%, accommodating nearly 100 more veterans than in 2014, by increasing our service from three to five days per week, and transporting veterans to the Catskill VA Clinic in Jefferson Heights.

2016 GOALS

The Agency goals for 2016 are:

- Procure wheelchair accessible van for transportation program
- Revise agency filing system, eliminating unnecessary paper files
- Digitize approximately 13,000 existing paper files
- Continue to increase overall productivity, ensuring as many Greene County veterans as possible are aware of and obtaining their VA and other veterans benefits
- Continue to streamline interagency services, by coordinating with other local agencies and departments who refer clients
- Implement a Greene County Peer to Peer program for veterans who need additional support transitioning to civilian life
- Complete the veterans work station within the office, allowing seeking employment to access a computer, printer, resume building software, and the internet.
- Continue to partner with local businesses and the County Clerk in maintaining and expanding the Greene County Return the Favor Program
- Proudly honor two deserving veterans in our Honor a Vet Memorial and Veteran of the Year ceremonies