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NEW MIDA PROJECT AREA AT SUNDANCE MOUNTAIN RESORT TO SUPPORT WOUNDED VETERANS

UTAH - Dec. 19, 2023 - Meeting its mission to strengthen, support and facilitate Utah's and our country's military members, a new Military Installation Development Authority (MIDA) project area at Sundance Mountain Resort was unanimously approved by MIDA's board of directors on Tuesday during a virtual public meeting.

To execute on the Sundance Project Area, MIDA will facilitate a collaborative partnership with Utah County and Storyteller Canyon Property Owner, LP, (Storyteller) and its affiliates. On Nov. 8 of this year, and in recognition of Veterans Day, Utah County Council formally invited MIDA to establish the project area.

MIDA's primary role will be to issue public bonds to help finance a 63-room, ADA-accessible inn at the resort base village that will include the creation of a Public Infrastructure District. The inn is intended to serve a year-round, healing veterans program (program name has not been finalized), including participants and their families, as well as non-military recreational guests.

On Tuesday, Sundance Mountain Resort partner and investor, Bill Jensen, explained to the MIDA board that the programming at Sundance will build off the 20-year Vail Veterans Program founded in Colorado by his wife, Cheryl.

“Cheryl visited Walter Reed Military Hospital when the first severely wounded troops from Iraq were being treated there,” explained Jensen. “The horrific injuries war had sustained on these individuals created an urgent desire in her to help these veterans on the road to recovery. In March of 2004 she brought seven amputee veterans from Walter Reed to Colorado for an adaptive ski experience. An army veteran and double AK (above-the-knee) amputee, Sgt. Heath Calhoun, commented to my wife and I at the end of this four-day program that he did not know why we did this, but we changed his life.

“With that,” added Jensen, “we realized that mountains have the potential to heal people, and over the past 19 years, we have brought over 3,600 severely wounded veterans and their families to the mountains of Colorado to support their healing journey. We believe the mountains provide a stress-free environment that builds confidence, resiliency, provides coping mechanisms and rejuvenates the spirit of those and their families who have sacrificed for all of us.

“We believe Utah, and Sundance Mountain Resort specifically, has the opportunity to continue to assist the wounded and injured veteran community with year-round programming that will evolve with the veteran population to assist with their physical and emotional recovery and healing.”

Jensen further explained that the veteran programming is not a “vacation club” but “a commitment to provide a national community of wounded and injured veterans and their families, including Utah veterans and National Guard members, a variety of healing

opportunities rooted in the mountains to build confidence and reinforce purposeful lives.”

All costs to participating veterans and their families are covered, including transportation, lodging, meals and activities. Vail Veterans has well-established relationships with three U.S. military hospitals: Walter Reed National Military Center, Brooke Army Medical Center, and Balboa Naval Medical Center, as well as direct connections to nearly 4,000 wounded veterans and their families.

In acknowledging their Nov. 8 unanimous vote, Utah County Council member Brandon Gordon shared his enthusiasm for this program coming to Sundance saying he has visited Vail, Colo. and witnessed the Vail Veterans program first-hand.

MIDA Executive Director Paul Morris outlined the public benefits and economic soundness of the proposed project area, explaining that for MIDA to create a new project area, it has up to four criteria it must meet. In this case of a veterans program to be established at Sundance, MIDA will be facilitating military support programs.

“I really appreciate the commitment to veterans,” said Sen. Stuart Adams, chairman of the MIDA board.

MIDA board member Mike Ostermiller added, “I love everything about this proposal. This is why [MIDA was] created and this is our purpose.”

MIDA board member Gary Harter, who also serves as executive director of Utah’s Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, acknowledged how the veterans programming at Sundance will be very complementary to the offerings the National Ability Center will be providing to military members, veterans and retirees in the Military

Recreation Facility project area in Wasatch County. “This is a great win,” said Harter.

In other MIDA board news Tuesday, year-end recaps for the Falcon Hill and Military Recreational Facility project areas were also provided, and presentation materials can be found at midaut.org.

Images of participants of the Vail Veterans program:







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