

Sarasota, Florida -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) announced today that he has invited an official from the U.S. Veterans Administration and the project manager from the firm designing a national veterans cemetery to meet with him in Sarasota next week.

On Monday, May 21, Bruce Borko of the National Cemetery Administration and Sandy Smith of Miller Legg and Associates are expected to brief the Congressman and the Sarasota National Cemetery Advisory Committee on efforts to build a national veterans cemetery in Sarasota. Following the briefing, Buchanan, Borko, and others will tour the property recently purchased by the VA for the cemetery.

The Congressman announced recently that the VA completed the purchase of 295 acres of cattle ranch land on Clark Road in Sarasota for the cemetery.

“The timely completion of this project is a primary concern for area veterans and is one of my highest priorities,” said Buchanan. “I am anxious to receive a status report, learn more about the process from now to its successful conclusion, and visit the actual cemetery site.”

Buchanan also announced he has reappointed the Congressional Sarasota National Cemetery Advisory Committee.

“The committee has played a valuable role in the VA’s successful efforts to purchase a suitable site and retain a firm to design the new cemetery,” said Buchanan. “Their continued service will help ensure that our goals are met and that eligible veterans and family members can be placed to rest close to home and with the honor and dignity they deserve.”

Committee members include:

Sarasota County Veterans Commission Chairman Richard Swier, Chair

VFW Regional Veterans Service Officer Lee Kichen, Vice Chair

Manatee County Veterans Council Chair Ken McCoy

Sarasota County Commissioner Shannon Staub

Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Leroy Collins, Jr. or his designated representative

Local land attorney and certified architect George Mazzaranti
Funeral Home Owner Jason Toale

The following is for press purposes:

Monday, May 21, 2007

10:00 a.m. Bruce Borko of the National Cemetery Administration and a representative of Miller Legg and Associates will brief Congressman Vern Buchanan and the Sarasota National Cemetery Advisory Committee on efforts to build a national veterans cemetery in Sarasota. The briefing will be held in the full hall meeting room at the Sunshine VFW Post # 3233, located at 124 South Tuttle Avenue in Sarasota.

11:00 a.m. Buchanan, advisory committee chairman Rich Swier, Borko and others will tour the newly-purchased site. The property is located on Clark Road in Sarasota – four miles east of I-75.