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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Valley Regional Transit bus donation to help veterans in hospice care travel to favorite sites

A Treasure Valley veteran in hospice care being transported by ambulance from the Boise VA Medical Center to Salt Lake City had a simple request – one last opportunity to visit the Shoshone Falls near Twin Falls.

“We got there, took him out, and he really, really enjoyed it,” recalled William “Bud” Paine, a board director and Emergency Medical Services director of Lifestar Rural EMS Solutions. “The mental health aspect of this is just staggering.”

The success of this act of kindness got Paine to thinking about finding a way to get other veterans in hospice care to destinations in southern Idaho that they may never see again. Lifestar considered using a wheelchair van or ambulance, but those vehicles would not be large enough to accommodate the veteran, his or her family, and medical staff. And buying a larger vehicle for this purpose would be difficult due to the financial restraints Lifestar faces as a non-profit.

Paine decided a used smaller bus would be perfect for this service. He reached out to Valley Regional Transit (VRT), who will provide him with a smaller bus that was destined to be sold for scrap. The 2011 Ford 450 bus, which is being refurbished, has eight seats and can accommodate four wheelchairs.

Leslie Pedrosa, VRT Chief Operations Officer, said the bus was beyond its useful life per Federal Transit Administration schedules and has been replaced in the VRT fleet.

“It was our pleasure to work with Bud and Lifestar to secure a vehicle for this service,” Pedrosa said. “The fact that this bus will have a second life and provide an honorable service to our veterans in hospice care is amazing and something that will provide the family a lifetime of memories.”

“Without this vehicle, it would have been at least another year before we could have secured one,” Paine explained. “Without this bus donation, this would not be happening now.”

*MEDIA ALERT: Keys to the vehicle will be presented to Paine in the rear parking lot at LifeStar's Boise office, 1010 N. Orchard St., Ste. 7 at **11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 26.***

Paine is already thinking about who will be one of the first passengers to ride on the donated bus. "A lady at the VA said one of her hospice patients retired as a park ranger and wants to go back to what he called 'his mountains,'" Paine said. "We'll try to make that happen."

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Learn more about valleyregionaltransit: valleyregionaltransit.org

Learn more about Lifestar: lifestarruralems.org