

State will return veterans home property to Grand Island, Ricketts announces

By Robert Pore

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Gov. Pete Ricketts announced this morning that the state will turn over the Grand Island Veterans Home, along with the property that was originally deeded to the state in the 1880s, to the city of Grand Island.

"We think that will allow them to redevelop it for future growth to the city and be within the spirit of the original intention when that was given to the state in the first place," Ricketts said.

Ricketts made the announcement in Lincoln. He was joined by Department of Administrative Services Director Byron Diamond, Veterans Homes Director John Hilgert, state Sen. Mike Gloor and Grand Island Mayor Jeremy Jensen.

Ricketts said the move will also benefit the state as Grand Island will take over the care and maintenance of the Veterans Cemetery located on the land.

"We think this is a real win-win for the state of Nebraska, for the citizens of Nebraska and for the citizens of Grand Island to be able to have the opportunity to continue to use that ground that has been used for the veterans home," he said.

Diamond said the announcement is the first step in the transition of the property. He said the state, Gloor and the city Grand Island have been in discussions over the past several months about the property. The new veterans home in Kearney is expected to open in 2018.



FILE PHOTO: Grand Island Veterans Home

Donated flowers wait to be planted Tuesday at the Grand Island Veterans Home. (Independent/Matt Dixon)