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Newly Confirmed U.S. Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs Linda Schwartz to Join Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open Ceremonies

*Retiring Connecticut VA Commissioner to Bid Farewell
at Region's Largest Veterans Charity Golf Event*

New Britain, Conn., September 26, 2014 – Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Spooner Schwartz, confirmed by the U.S. Senate in Washington last week to fill one of the most influential positions at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, will take part next Thursday, October 2, in ceremonies honoring Connecticut veterans at the Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open, Central Connecticut's largest veterans charity golf event.

The event, presented by Farmington Bank and hosted by the Disabled American Veterans, Hardware City Chapter 8 (DAV), benefits House of Heroes Connecticut, Friends of Fisher House Connecticut, the DAV and other veterans charities. Additional major sponsors include The Starlight Program at Stonington Institute, Stanley Black & Decker, AT&T Connecticut, the Tomasso Group and the Petit Family Foundation. The New Britain Herald/Bristol Press is Media Sponsor of the event.

Some 150 golfers and more than 175 dinner guests will be on hand at Tunxis Plantation Country Club in Farmington at the post-golf barbeque and ceremonies honoring 94-year-old Ed Riccio, Jr. of Bristol, a Pearl Harbor survivor. The event, including the post-golf dinner, is sold out. Tee time is 11 a.m., with dinner and ceremonies scheduled for approximately 5 p.m.

Commissioner Schwartz, who will formerly retire from her Connecticut post as of October 1, is taking on the position of U.S. Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning. She will play a key role alongside new Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald as the agency reshapes its services for the nation's 24 million veterans.

Schwartz, a former U.S. Air Force nurse and Vietnam veteran, has been the state's VA commissioner since 2003. She is a long-time advocate and activist for veterans who devoted her nursing practice to healing the wounds of war and improving the lives of America's vets. Her perspectives as a nurse and veteran have earned her the respect and trust of veterans and government officials alike.

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Schwartz/Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open
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Commissioner Schwartz served as a reservist and on active duty for 20 years. She retired in 1986 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as a USAF Flight Nurse and currently holds the rank of Colonel on the Governor's Military Staff. She holds a Masters in Nursing from Yale University and a Doctorate in Public Health from the Yale School of Medicine,

Also taking part in Thursday's post-golf ceremonies will be New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart, Bristol Mayor Ken Cockayne, Honorary Chairman and Farmington Bank President, Chairman and CEO John Patrick, Jr., the New Britain Senior High School Jr. ROTC Color Guard, and members of the Marine Corps League, Hardware City Detachment 781. Prior to tee time, the DAV Chapter 8 Color Guard will accompany 12-year-old Megan McDaniel of East Hampton, daughter of Connecticut National Guardsman Captain Jeff McDaniel and U.S. Army veteran Dawn McDaniel, as she sings the National Anthem.

For more information on the Golden Kielbasa Veterans Open, please contact Tournament Founder and Director Dennis Buden at dennis@goldenkielbasa.org or 860-558-0514, or visit www.goldenkielbasa.org.