

Alabama Veteran Casino Night Gala moves to Hyatt Regency

Written by Administrator
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The Alabama Veteran group is moving its annual Salute to Service Casino Night Gala to the Hyatt Regency Birmingham — The Wynfrey Hotel on Aug. 13.

In recent years, the event has been at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa, but the maximum capacity there was 350 to 360 people, and the Alabama Veteran group wanted additional space to accommodate more people, organizer Alan Cook said. “We needed to continue to grow.”

The event is a fundraiser for the nonprofit, which aims to help veterans reach their full potential after the military, promoting camaraderie through outdoor activities, fitness and social engagement, and connecting veterans to potential employers and organizations that meet veterans’ needs.

The Casino Night Gala allows the group to celebrate the service of veterans and have dinner and casino games with fake “casino money.” A \$125 ticket includes dinner and dessert, dancing, \$1,000 in “casino money” and an opportunity to participate in a silent auction and win raffle prizes.

Companies and organizations can buy a sponsor table for 10 for \$1,500. Some companies choose to donate some or all of their tickets to veterans or active military members. Companies also can sponsor a casino table for \$500.

Attendees also will get a chance to hear from guest speaker Nate Boyer, a former U.S. Army Green Beret who deployed to Iraq and came back to walk on and start 38 straight games as a long-snapper for the University of Texas football team and then became the oldest rookie in NFL history when he joined the Seattle Seahawks in 2015 at age 34. Boyer played in a preseason game but was let go to make room for a quarterback.

Last year’s Casino Night Gala raised about \$90,000, Cook said. This year, the Alabama Veteran group will be talking more about a new major project to open a place for veterans to live for six months as they transition back into civilian life. The group plans to provide skills and job training, food, financial management advice, and equine therapy for veterans with

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post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries. It's sort of like a "reverse boot camp" to help veterans get set up for success in civilian life, Cook said.

Alabama Veteran has been given 50 acres in Lincoln and \$75,000 from Honda Manufacturing to renovate a 6,800-square-foot home on the property to serve as an administrative headquarters building, Cook said.

The plan for phase one is to build 20 to 30 300-square-foot "tiny homes," each costing about \$30,000, Cook said. Phase two would include homes for veterans with families, and phase three would involve rehabilitation therapies, he said.

The Alabama Veteran project is patterned after a veterans' lodge in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, and is part of a larger effort by the city of Lincoln to serve veterans at a 190-acre Veterans Park, Cook said. The city of Lincoln gave 50 acres of the park to Alabama Veteran, he said. Talladega County and the Alabama Power Foundation also are serving as partners with Alabama Veteran.

Alabama Veteran Casino Night Gala

WHERE: Hyatt Regency Birmingham — The Wynfrey Hotel

WHEN: Aug. 13

COST: \$125 or \$1,500 to sponsor a table for 10

WEB: alabamaveteran.org/gala

Read more <https://hooversun.com/news/alabama-veteran-casino-night-gala-moves-to-hyatt-regency/>