

**Washington D.C.** - Today, Congressmen Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) and Jim Costa (D-Bakersfield) announced a step forward for the Bakersfield National Cemetery as the Department of Veterans Affairs awarded a construction contract for Phase 1A portion of the new Bakersfield National Cemetery in Arvin, CA.

*“On December 7th, we gathered together to break ground at the long-awaited Bakersfield National Cemetery, and based on the number of veterans and neighbors in attendance, it was apparent why Bakersfield was selected as a location – because we honor our fellow neighbors who served our country, and we will never forget those who walked, wore the uniform, and sacrificed to make sure we live in a free nation,” said McCarthy. “Today’s announcement on the award of the first phase of the construction contract continues the positive steps forward towards completing the cemetery.*

*“I’m very happy to hear that the Department of Veterans Affairs allocated these funds to build the cemetery,” said Costa. “We owe our Valley veterans a debt of gratitude for their sacrifice, whether that is a hospital, home loans, or a dignified final resting place. I look forward to seeing this project completed.”*

Phase 1 of the Bakersfield National Cemetery is scheduled for completion in the fall 2009. This phase of the project is a 10 acre development that will provide an estimated two years of burial services, and will enable the VA to start burial operations while the remainder of Phase 1 is under construction. The contract for Phase 1 was awarded to Combined Effort, Inc., from Jamestown, California, in the amount of \$2.8 million.