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PRESS RELEASE

VLB LAUNCHES 24/7 VIRTUAL ASSISTANT TO AID TEXAS VETERANS

Maverick uses AI capabilities from IBM Watson to help provide quick answers to Veterans about a wide array of benefits topics

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AUSTIN — Today Texas Land Commissioner and Chairman of the Veterans Land Board, George P. Bush, announced the official launch of the VLB virtual assistant, fondly named, Maverick.

Using IBM Watson, the virtual assistant is the first of its kind for the agency and will provide Veterans with faster access to answers and help them access the benefits they've earned. From VLB home improvement loans to questions on Texas Veterans Homes, Maverick will provide the responsiveness needed in these unique times.

"The VLB seeks to serve as a central point for information in the Veteran community, and service for our men and women who served our country means providing far beyond minimum expectations," said Chairman George P. Bush. "While the VLB continues to provide a call center helpline with staff who stand ready and waiting to answer during business hours, not all questions arise between eight to five, and we know that. The VLB is proud to announce the release of Maverick, a virtual assistant using IBM Watson Artificial Intelligence (AI), that can quickly answer questions regarding our programs, 24/7. We are excited to take advantage of this innovative AI technology to provide the best possible service for our Texas Veterans."

In addition to answering questions regarding loans, Veteran homes, and Texas State Cemeteries, Maverick will also serve as a directory that can point Veterans in the right direction to find answers to common questions outside the wheelhouse of the VLB, from VA related questions to Texas Parks and Wildlife for inquiries on how to obtain a fishing license. Maverick can answer questions on 119 different topics.

Maverick utilizes cutting edge AI solutions from [IBM Watson](#) and is designed to help save Veterans time and frustration. IBM Watson is AI that helps organizations predict and shape outcomes, automate complex processes, and optimize employees' time.

Maverick is using IBM Watson Assistant and IBM Watson Discovery on IBM public cloud. It uses natural language processing and machine learning to understand questions from users and delivers answers in real-time. To create Maverick, IBM Watson Assistant was trained on data and information from the VLB. It is designed to understand when to ask for clarity and can direct users to the VLB call center to get additional insights and information during business hours.

Users can access the virtual assistant from anywhere on the [VLB website](#). The VLB call center remains fully staffed, operational, and equipped to answer questions.