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January 2012



Welcome to Colorado ESGR. Our purpose is to have an informative newsletter that will educate, inform, and promote service by and to ESGR while fulfilling our mission of supporting Employers, Guard/Reserve members, and COESGR Volunteers.

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COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD LEADING THE WAY IN HELPING THEIR GUARDSMEN FIND EMPLOYMENT



Colorado National Guard troops serving on deployment in Afghanistan

Forward thinking by the Colorado Army National Guard along with a concerted effort from ESGR leadership and the Department of Labor is leading to the development of a program to help Colorado National Guard members returning from long deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Colorado National Guard’s employment initiative, supported by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and Colorado Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Volunteers, is aimed at identifying and assisting those returning National Guard members who do not have jobs to come home to or are seeking new employment on their return.



NOMINATE YOUR SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYER

2012 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD

Attention Guard and Reservists!

The 2012 Freedom Award Nomination Season is open! Don't Delay!!
Nominate by January 16th.

Does your civilian employer provide exceptional support for your military service? Nominate them for the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Accepting nominations until January 16, 2012. [Click here](#) to submit your nomination!

The first National Guard unit to participate in this concerted and coordinated effort is the 928th Area Medical Support Company* and their some 75 members, who have recently returned home after a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan. Soldiers in that unit completed questionnaires about their employment status before returning home and Colorado National Guard Family Programs personnel reviewed the forms to identify those members who will need personalized assistance with employment upon their return.

To help those National Guardsmen that need assistance, arrangements were made for the returning soldiers to attend a [Transition Assistance Program](#) before they arrived in Colorado. Meanwhile, after compiling the necessary information from each Guardsman, the data is being sorted and distributed to those employers who are looking for employees with those skill sets and experience.

The next step will be at the unit's 30 day Yellow Ribbon event, a post-mobilization event for the unit, where employers looking for those types of employees will be invited to come to meet, talk, and interview those soldiers they may be interested in hiring. During this period of time from their arrival back in Colorado and the first Yellow Ribbon event, CDLE counselors and ESGR Volunteers will be available to any of those 75 Guardsmen who request help in such things as preparing or improving their resume, receiving information on where jobs are located, how to prepare for a job interview, and to answer any questions concerning employment from these returning citizen soldiers.



BG Robert K. Balster

“It is an ambitious program”, stated Brigadier General Robert K. Balster, the Land Component Commander, ***“but we owe it to these Guardsmen to give them the one on one help and support for finding employment.”*** His words and commitment are echoed by Major General Edwards, Adjutant General of the Colorado National Guard and Brigadier General Dana Capozzella, Commander, Colorado Army National Guard as well as ESGR, CDLE and our Colorado National Guard's Yellow Ribbon team. All of these diverse organizations are committed and are working hard together to make this program work.

Dick Young, State Chairman of ESGR, thanked Elaine Edon and the CDLE team for their strong support for this effort and her confirmation that

“Governor Hickenlooper is pushing to make Colorado the most veteran friendly state in the Union, and I know he is most anxious that our returning warriors get the help they need to get back employed.”

If you are an employer in the medical/health field and are looking for some excellent trained and experienced medical technician types, please send an e-mail to Dick Young, Colorado's ESGR State Chair, at dickyoung123@gmail.com. He will assist you in contacting the organizers of this employment effort, and thank you for helping our returning National Guardsmen.

**** The 928th ASMC is composed of Montrose and Delta County soldiers. They provide corps-level medical services, emergency treatments, they treat sick-call incidences and ground evacuations by ambulance. The group is composed of local physicians, Registered Nurses, Physician's Assistants, along with cooks, mechanics and radio operators.***



H2H.jobs is a powerful, comprehensive employment program with a powerful job search site and online community that is 100% free for veterans, service members and employers. It contains everything a job seeker needs to find a job including job listings, career exploration tools, education and training resources, advice and tips, and networking opportunities. The goal of the H2H program is to reduce the number of Reserve Component service members who are unemployed by helping them find jobs. Additionally, H2H.jobs gives military-friendly companies access to service members and allows them to post job openings, search for candidates and invite them to apply, and participate in hiring events - all free of cost.

H2H will provide the following opportunities for job seekers and employers:

- 40 job fairs around the country sponsored by the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.
- A large H2H booth manned by H2H Yellow Ribbon or State ESGR Committee representatives.
- * Ten large iPad kiosks will be placed around each event to provide a convenient way for attendees to sign up for the H2H program.
- * Job seekers will have 24/7 access to at least 30 H2H sponsored Virtual Career Fairs (www.veteranscareerfair.com) provided specifically for military service members where they can search for jobs and learn more about military-friendly companies who are hiring.

H2H is well positioned to successfully assist unemployed Reserve Component service members receiving unemployment benefits with job placement services. Through an electronic job and career platform, mobile applications, social media integration, virtual and physical career fairs, and a national marketing and management effort, this program can reduce the stress and financial hardships on unemployed RC service members and their families as well as reduce the Department of Defense's unemployment costs. More information on H2H will be disseminated as the December 16th release date gets closer .

Visit <https://h2h.jobs/> **Today!**

VA Programs & Services You Should Know About



Returning Service Members (OEF/OIF): Have you recently returned from military service? Now is the time to take advantage of the benefits VA offers OEF/OIF Veterans.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Service: Provides comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine your abilities, skills and interests for employment. You can also receive employment services such as job training and help with your job search and resume writing.

Homeless Veterans: Includes information and resources that provide permanent or temporary housing and ongoing case management and treatment services for homeless Veterans.

Military Service Benefits: Find out which VA benefits you may be eligible for while serving in the military, whether you are on active duty, serving as an AGR or in a traditional Guard/Reserve role.

Center for Minority Veterans: Assists eligible Veterans in accessing benefits and services from VA.

Office of Survivors Assistance: Helps families, caregivers and others become better informed about the benefits and services offered by VA, including the application process for receiving benefits.

Center for Women Veterans: Serves as a resource and referral center for women Veterans, their families and their advocates. Women Veterans Program Managers are located in each VA health care facility.

Adaptive Sports Program: Find an adaptive sports program that suits your needs, no matter what your disability, age or skill level may be. Besides the fun, new friendships and exercise, look into why you should consider adaptive sports.

Looking for information about organizations, programs and services near you? Visit the National Resource Directory's **Information by State** section. Choose your state, and then select a subject, for example, Employment, Housing, Benefits, etc.



National Resource Directory

Connecting Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans,
Their Families and Caregivers with Those Who Support Them



Fact Sheet on the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits

On November 21st, culminating the effort President Obama began on August 5th at Navy Yard and advanced through the American Jobs Act, the President signed *The Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011*. This law combined provisions of the veterans' tax credits from the President's American Jobs Act, Chairman Murray's Hiring Heroes Act, and Chairman Miller's Veterans Opportunity to Work Act into a comprehensive package that will aggressively attack the unacceptably high rate of veteran's unemployment.

- The *Returning Heroes Tax Credit* is a new hiring tax credit that incentivizes firms to hire unemployed veterans.
 - Short-term unemployed: A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$6,000 of wages (up to \$2,400) for employers who hire veterans who have been unemployed at least 4 weeks.
 - Long-term unemployed: A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$14,000 of wages (up to \$5,600) for employers who hire veterans who have been unemployed longer than 6 months.
- The *Wounded Warrior Tax Credit* doubles the existing tax credit for long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities.
 - Maintain the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit for veterans with service-connected disabilities (currently the maximum is \$4,800).
 - A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$24,000 of wages (up to \$9,600) for firms that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been unemployed longer than 6 months.

How Businesses Can Apply for These Credits

- Within 28 days of hiring a veteran, businesses (including both for-profit and non-profit organizations) must submit IRS form [8850](#) and either the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) form [9061](#) or [9062](#) to their local state Work Opportunity Tax Credit coordinator for certification. (Click on Form numbers for links)
 - ETA is working to revise and issue ETA Form 9061, and update all other program-related materials, to reflect these new tax credits. During this transition period until revised forms are issued, employers are instructed to continue to use the current ETA Form 9061. When requesting certification for the veteran target groups using ETA Form 9061, employers and consultants should do the following:
 - When using the hard copies of Form 9061, indicate in red at the top margin of the form the veteran target group for which they are requesting certification.
 - When using an electronic form for the 9061 with those states that are fully automated, indicate in black at the top margin of the form the veteran target group for which they are requesting certification.
 - Companies may need the following documents from veteran hires to complete these forms for certification: DD-214 or discharge papers; reserve unit contacts; FL 21-802; unemployment insurance claim records; and birth certificate.
- Once businesses receive certification letters from their state workforce agency, they can then claim the tax credit for certified workers on their annual income tax returns (e.g., IRS form 1120 for corporations, 1065 for partnerships, and 1040 for self-employed).
- For tax purposes, this tax credit is considered a general business credit. To the extent that general business credits claimed exceed taxable liability for a given year, the excess general business credits can be carried back to prior years or carried forward to future years.

(See last page of newsletter for information on Colorado's WOTC Coordinator)

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office was recognized for its support of military service members and their families. Specifically, Sheriff Mink received a **Patriot Award** provided by the US Department of Defense. He was nominated by SMSgt Richard D. Fickas, USAFR, who said that *"Sheriff Ted Mink deserves this award or a higher award due his ongoing support of the Guard and Reserve. I have worked at the Sheriff's Office for over 10 years and Jefferson County and the Sheriff's Office goes above and beyond when it comes to the support the Guard and Reserve...I and many other employees who serve in the Guard or Reserves are very lucky to have an employer who provides significant additional benefits above what is required by law and continues to support our missions. Sheriff Ted Mink, Jefferson County and the Supervisors of the Sheriff's Office are a shining example of how an employer should support our troops."*



(l to r) James Garrett (ESGR), Sheriff Ted Mink, SMSGT Richard D. Fickas.

Although Douglas County Libraries previously signed a Statement of Support in 2009, the Board, together with Director Jamie LaRue, consider the ESGR employer Statement of Support to be an important affirmation of the organization's mission and policies, and is a positive action that they can take to support their employees who are Reserve Component Service Members. In addition to the Board members and Director, also in attendance were Library branch managers and senior staff; Douglas County Sheriff David Weaver and Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Pam Ridler to show their strong support.



(l to r) Bob Rotruck (ESGR), Jamie LaRue (Director, DC Libraries), Amy Hunt (President, Board of Directors), Lorin Ricker (ESGR).

The Colorado West Mental Health Stabilization Center of Grand Junction was recognized for their support of military service members and their families. Specifically, the Mental Health Center provided administrative assistance above and beyond with their steps taken in helping returning Veterans with getting them back to work. Lacinda Kelleher, Director of Nursing received a **Patriot Award** provided by the US Department of Defense. She was nominated by Sgt Matthew P. Coonts who said that my *"employer rushed my paperwork in order to get me working as soon as I asked for my job back."* This is extremely important response by an employer because of the current environment of high unemployment statistics for Veterans and Reserve Component members returning from military service.



Lacinda Kelleher Lou Brackett Colorado ESGR Volunteer

USERRA Q & A, Part Three

As a continuation to last month's newsletter, here are four more frequently asked questions that the ESGR Ombudsman team receives about USERRA. You can find the source references to each question in the 20 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1002, at www.ESGR.mil.

[Part 1002—Regulations under the Uniformed Services Employment And Reemployment Rights Act Of 1994](#)

1. Am I entitled to raises I would have received had I never left?

A. Yes. (See [1002.236](#)) A service member should expect to be reinstated to earn the pay that he/she would have likely received had he/she not been absent for military service.

2. Can I make up my missed 401k contributions after military service?

A. Yes. (See [1002.262b](#)) A service member may make up missed contributions to his/her 401k upon his/her return from military service in up to 3 times the length of the service member's most recent past period of service not to exceed five years.

3. I got hurt while performing military service and now have a military injury. Does my employer have to bring me back?

A. Yes. (See [1002.225-226](#)) The employer has an obligation to place the service member into the position that he/she would have likely attained had he/she not left military service that can accommodate the doctor's restrictions. If accommodating the doctor's restrictions causes the employer undue hardship, the employer may be excused from reinstating the service member.

4. Does my employer have to provide me the option to make up the hours I missed at work since I had to perform military service?

A. No. (See [1002.104](#)) An employee should not be expected nor should the employee expect to make up work hours missed while performing military service.

If you receive a question and are unsure of the answer, direct the inquirer to the Call Center at 800-336-4590 option 1 or your state Ombudsman Team. Want to learn more? [USERRA 101](#) and [102](#) online trainings are available at www.esgr.mil.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ([USERRA, 38 U.S.C. § 4301 – 4335](#)) is a federal law intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard or other "uniformed services:" (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service. The federal government is to be a "model employer" under USERRA ([38 U.S.C. § 4301](#)).

1-800-336-4590, opt 1

USERRA@osd.mil

ATTN: Ombudsman
Services
1555 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209

EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY 2012

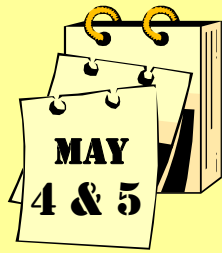
- 16 Freedom Award Nominations Close
- 20 Colorado HR Association Conf.
- 24 Ombudsman Refresher Training
- 27 Student Veterans in Higher Education, Ft Collins, CO

FEBRUARY 2012

- 9 COESGR Directors Meeting
- 11 New Volunteers Training, Area Chair Meeting

Save the Date!!

- May 4 - Awards Banquet
- May 5 - COESGR Volunteer Conference



State of Colorado Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Coordinator

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 Division of Employment Programs
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We are on Facebook and Twitter!!

National Site News and Information



Join Facebook and Twitter and become a friend of Colorado ESGR



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