



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.

**Inside this Issue**

- [Freedom Award Nominations](#)..... 1
- [Freedom Award Process](#)..... 2
- [Awards](#) .....3
- [USERRA Information](#).....4
- [SOS Information](#).....5
- [Events/Contacts](#).....6



The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their support of their employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve. The 2011 nomination period saw over 4,000 Guard and Reserve members nominating employers for exceptional support.

**The 2012 nomination season will open Monday, November 1, 2011.**

Only 145 companies have been presented the Freedom Award since it was first instituted in 1996. Freedom Award recipients distinguish themselves by going to extraordinary lengths to support their military employees. 2011's honorees ranged from a small church in South Dakota, to two sheriff's departments, to major automotive, technology, and banking corporations.



National Site News and Information





Join Facebook and Twitter and become a friend of Colorado ESGR






**Scribd**

Click on any photo or icon in the Newsletter for website link.



**Past Colorado Recipients:**

- 2011 - Qwest Communications, Denver
- 2010 - Newmont Mining Corporation, Denver
- 2009 - First Data Corporation, Greenwood Village
- 2006 - Fred Fletemeyer Company, Colorado Springs
- 2004 - Coors Brewing, Golden, CO

Colorado's ESGR Electronic Newsletter is published not only for the information and benefit of the members of the Colorado ESGR but most importantly to our Guard and Reserve members and their employers. The contents of this newsletter highlight activities and events conducted by Colorado ESGR. Send comments regarding this publication to the Newsletter Editor: James Garrett at [esgcolorado@yahoo.com](mailto:esgcolorado@yahoo.com)

**How to complete the nomination process: all applications are submitted online to ESGR**

Fill out the nomination form fully and accurately at:

<http://www.freedomaward.mil>

- ◇ Once in the nomination form, your information will not be saved until you hit "Submit". You may want to print out these instructions prior to entering the nomination form for reference. Do not hit the "Backspace" key or the "Back" button arrow in your web browser unless you are OK with losing the information you have already entered.
- ◇ Ask your employer or HR representative for clarification if you are unsure of the best answer to the questions. You can even print out the nomination and discuss with your HR representative for assistance.

**Who is eligible to nominate?**

***Only*** a Guard or Reserve service member can nominate their employer.

*If a service member does not have online access to submit a nomination, a family member can nominate the service member's employer on their behalf.*

**Who is eligible to receive the award?**

*Small, large (500+) and public employers can be nominated. The employer **MUST** be the service member's current employer.*

*Nominations for friends, family, schools, stores, etc. that are not the service member's employer will not be considered.*

- ◇ For each question, please provide supporting information in the text box below each question. This is your chance to enhance your nomination by providing thorough explanations of why your employer deserves to be considered for this award (for example: elaborating on pay and benefit policies, service member and family support provided).

**Information to include in text boxes:**

- \* What sets your employer apart from others?
- \* Do they make it easy for you to meet your military service obligations?
- \* Did they provide free childcare while you were deployed, or take care of your lawn while you were gone?
- \* Do they check up on your spouse, family members, or perform home repair in a time of crisis in your absence?

Elaborating on all of the ways in which your employer supports you, your family, other service members and the military community will ensure the strongest nomination possible. For more information on what it takes to be a Freedom Award recipient, please select an option from the "Recipient" dropdown menu to see the contributions made by current and previous recipients.

**What happens next?..**

After your nomination is submitted, it will go to a review committee in your state. Once the nomination period closes in January, the state will select semifinalists to move on to the next round of competition. A review board at HQ ESGR, a Department of Defense agency, considers all semifinalists for selection to the next round (finalists). The group of finalists goes before a National Selection Board comprised of senior Department of Defense officials, representatives from each of the seven Reserve Components, employer associations and past recipients of the Freedom Award. This selection committee makes recommendations for up to 15 recipients to the Secretary of Defense for final approval. Recipients are finalized by early summer. The annual award ceremony is held each September.

**The 2012 Freedom Award nomination period will close on the third Monday in January 2012.**



Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) volunteers from Douglas County gathered at the September 13, 2011 meeting of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners to bestow two important awards; 1) the prestigious [ESGR Patriot Award](#) to Sheriff David Weaver on behalf of the Douglas County Sheriff's office and 2) and [ESGR Statement of Support](#) was presented for official signatures by members of the Board of Commissioners.



Front row (l to r): DCSO Deputy [Mark Barela](#); Lorin Ricker, ESGR Douglas County area co-chair; county commissioners Steven Board, Jill Repella, chair, and Jack Hilbert; Douglas County Sheriff David Weaver. Back row (l to r): Douglas County Undersheriff Tony Spurlock; DCSO Deputy [John Compton](#); Scott Mace, ESGR volunteer; and DCSO Deputy [Mark Tracy](#).

Pictured left to right: Deputy [Mark Tracy](#), Undersheriff Tony Spurlock, Lorin Ricker, Sheriff David Weaver, Deputy [John Compton](#), and Deputy Jeffrey Burke.



SSgt Mark Tracy who submitted the nomination wrote, ***“We have many Guard and Reserve members in our agency and many have been on deployments over the past 5 years. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office not only supports the soldiers, sailors, airman and marines as they are called up, but also continues paying them a differential, and maintains all benefits for a period of 12 months. Sheriff Dave Weaver remembers his employees that are called to fulfill their nation's duties, and treats us well. I was on an 18 month deployment and the sheriff's office took very good care of my family, and made my transition back to work very smooth. I am grateful for an employer like DCSO and a boss like Dave Weaver. Thanks.”***

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners underscored the County's leadership role as an employer of National Guard and Reserve service men and women by placing their individual signatures on a specially enlarged version of ESGR's Statement of Support certificate.

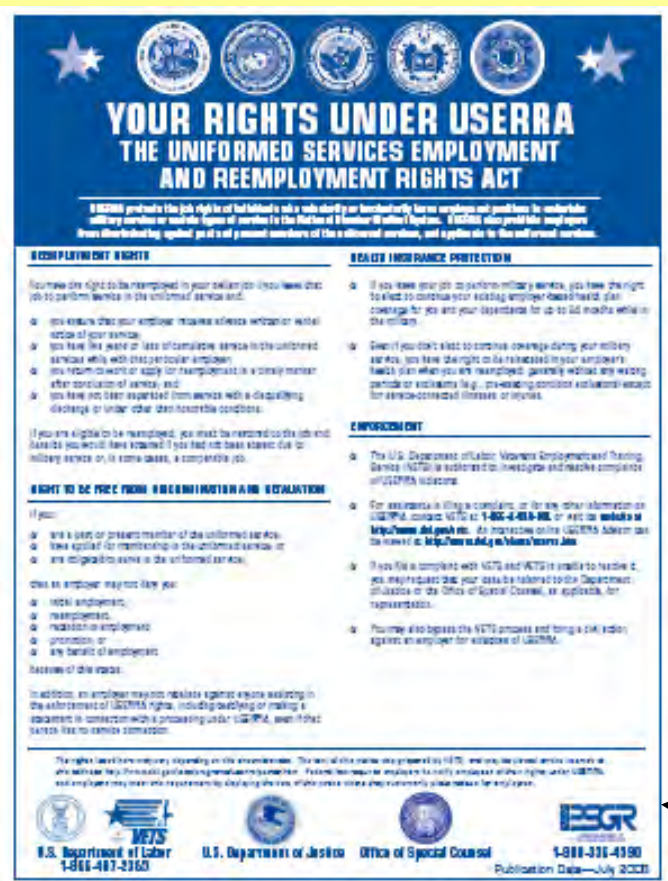
Commissioners Jill Repella, Chair, Steven Board and Jack Hilbert joined Sheriff Weaver in signing this document, which will be prominently displayed in the Commissioners' Office, Philip S. Miller Building, 100 Third Street, Castle Rock.

*Each of the Commissioners spoke appreciatively about the national service performed by National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves service men and women, and especially about those in the County's*

**Deputies Barela, Compton and Tracy are U.S. military Reserve Component (RC) service members.**

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff David Weaver were nominated for an ESGR Patriot Award by Deputy Mark Tracy, who also is a Staff Sergeant in the Colorado National Guard.

Deputy Tracy's nomination cited several critical employment policies implemented by the Sheriff's Office and Douglas County which make possible the lengthy deployments of himself and other deputies who serve in the Armed Forces Reserve Component, including differential pay, benefits coverage and direct support of their families during deployments.



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](#)).

← (Click on the picture to download the poster)

## USERRA FAQ's

Understanding the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is not just for Ombudsmen anymore. From Bosslifts and unit briefings to golfing in your ESGR shirt, each member of ESGR has likely been asked a question about USERRA rights and responsibilities. While volunteers are not expected to know everything about USERRA, it is helpful to know answers to some regularly asked questions. In upcoming editions, the ombudsman team will share frequently asked questions and answers fielded in the call center. All references are from the 20 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1002 found at [www.ESGR.mil/site/USERRA/FAQ](http://www.ESGR.mil/site/USERRA/FAQ).

**1. If I volunteer for service, am I covered under USERRA?**

A. Yes. USERRA offers the same protection for voluntary and involuntary service. (See 1002.6)

**2. Does my employer have to make up the difference in my pay while I am performing military service?**

A. No, USERRA does not require employers to compensate employees while they are performing military service.

**3. Do I have to provide documentation when I leave for duty?**

A. No. When giving advanced notice of military service, you must give either verbal or written notice in no defined format. (See 1002.85) To maintain positive employer/employee relationships, you should provide written notice when available and maintain open communication regarding service requirements.

**4. Can my employer charge my accrued annual leave when I perform military service?**

A. No. Your employer may not require you to use your annual accrued leave during the performance of your military service. (See 1002.153)

**5. When I return from one year of service does my employer have to return me to my exact position?**

A. No. Your employer can reemploy you in either your pre-service position; the escalator position (position you would have held with reasonable certainty had you not been absent for service); a position comparable to the escalator or pre-service position; or the nearest approximation to one of these positions. (See 1002.197)

If you are asked 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. If you would like to learn more about USERRA, consider completing USERRA 101 and 102 online training at [www.ESGR.mil](http://www.ESGR.mil).

1-800-336-4590, opt 1

USERRA@osd.mil

ATTN: Ombudsman Services

1555 Wilson Blvd  
Arlington, VA 22209



## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE



### XYZ Company

We recognize the Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being of our communities.

In the highest American tradition, the patriotic men and women of the Guard and Reserve serve voluntarily in an honorable and vital profession. They train to respond to their community and their country in time of need. They deserve the support of every segment of our society.

If these volunteer forces are to continue to serve our nation, increased public understanding is required of the essential role of the Guard and Reserve in preserving our national security.

Therefore, we join other employers in pledging that:

- We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- Our managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
- We appreciate the values, leadership and unique skills service members bring to the workforce and will encourage opportunities to hire Guardsmen, Reservists, and Veterans.
- We will continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crisis, and in war.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer

James G. Rehrig  
National Chair, ESGR

Leon E. Panetta  
Secretary of Defense

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



### The focus of ESGR is four-fold:

- ✦ Promote an understanding of Guard and Reserve service.
- ✦ Enlist support of employers in development of human resource policies and practices that support and encourage employee participation in Guard and Reserve programs.
- ✦ Disseminate information to improve knowledge of, and voluntary compliance with, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) among Reserve component leaders, members, and their employers.
- ✦ Sustain willingness of employers to support their employees called to military service for the Global War on Terrorism over potentially longer periods of time and greater frequency.

*The ESGR Statement of Support Program seeks to inform and educate employers about their rights and responsibilities towards their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, and to also recognize and reward those employers who go “over and above” the requirements of the law.*

***The new Statement of Support includes an extra bullet targeting employment.***

***Employers, if you have not signed a statement of support in 2011 or you have one that you signed in a previous year, please let us know and we will present the new one to sign and display proudly your continuing support. If in your professional network you know of an employer that would like to sign a Statement of Support and be a part of ESGR’s network, please contact us at 720.250.1176, or email***

[patrick.oflaherty2@us.army.mil](mailto:patrick.oflaherty2@us.army.mil)

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

**4-6 88TH RSC Yellow Ribbon Event  
Denver, CO**

### DECEMBER

**3 New Volunteer Training  
Centennial, CO**

**16-18 88th RSC Yellow Ribbon Event**

## Guardsmen and Reservists, Say Thanks to Your Employer!

Would you like to recognize your employer for supporting your military service? Colorado ESGR can help! We offer a variety of recognition for your employer. The first step in having your employer considered for recognition as an outstanding employer is to submit a Patriot Award nomination. **Tell us why your employer is great!** When completing the employer recognition form, take a few moments to explain why your employer deserves to be recognized. Colorado ESGR volunteers will review your nomination when they select nominees for higher-level employer support awards.

For more information, visit [ESGR Patriot Award Nomination](#).

## Real Warriors Campaign

The Real Warriors Campaign is an initiative launched by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) to promote the processes of building resilience, facilitating recovery and supporting reintegration of returning service members, veterans and their families. The Campaign promotes help-seeking behavior among service members and veterans with invisible wounds and encourages service members to increase their awareness and use of these resources. It features stories of real service members who have sought treatment and are continuing to maintain successful military or civilian careers. In addition, DCoE established the DCoE Outreach Center, a 24/7 call center staffed by health resource consultants to provide confidential answers, tools, tips and resources about psychological health and traumatic brain injury. The Outreach Center may be reached toll-free at 1-866-966-1020 or via e-mail at [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org).

[www.RealWarrior.Net](http://www.RealWarrior.Net)

**REAL WARRIORS + REAL BATTLES  
REAL STRENGTH**

## STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Pat O'Flaherty** – Staff Director

[patrick.oflaherty2@us.army.mil](mailto:patrick.oflaherty2@us.army.mil)

720.250.1176

**Kathleen Dorram** – Program Support Manager

[Kathleen.dorram@us.army.mil](mailto:Kathleen.dorram@us.army.mil)

720.250.1195 FAX: 720.250.1199

**Chandra Hance** – Program Support Specialist

[chandra.hance@us.army.mil](mailto:chandra.hance@us.army.mil)

720.250.1189 FAX: 720.250.1199

### **COESGR Business Office**

12200 East Briarwood Avenue, Suite 160  
Centennial, Co 80112

### **State ESGR Chair**

Richard E. Young, RADM, USN  
(Ret)

[dickyyoung123@gmail.com](mailto:dickyyoung123@gmail.com)

#### **COLORADO ESGR DIRECTORS**

##### **Military Outreach**

Mary Rathje  
[mkrathje@aol.com](mailto:mkrathje@aol.com)

Joe Ely  
[elytj@aol.com](mailto:elytj@aol.com)

##### **Employer Outreach**

Bev Skinner  
[jtsbbs@gmail.com](mailto:jtsbbs@gmail.com)

Dave Pruett - Co-Director  
[PruettDE@comcast.net](mailto:PruettDE@comcast.net)

##### **Ombudsmen**

Bill Belz  
[ewbii@msn.com](mailto:ewbii@msn.com)

##### **Training**

Lynn Albi  
[lynnalbi@aol.com](mailto:lynnalbi@aol.com)

##### **Special Programs**

Kip Cheroutes  
[kcheroutes@Emgacomunications.com](mailto:kcheroutes@Emgacomunications.com)

##### **Speakers Bureau**

Martin Cobb  
[emarcobb@msn.com](mailto:emarcobb@msn.com)

##### **Public Affairs**

Iris Fontera  
[IFontera@aol.com](mailto:IFontera@aol.com)

#### **EMPLOYER OUTREACH AREA CHAIR COORDINATOR**

Lorin Ricker  
[Lorin@RickerNet.us](mailto:Lorin@RickerNet.us)

#### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

James Garrett  
[esgrcolorado@yahoo.com](mailto:esgrcolorado@yahoo.com)

### **State ESGR Vice Chair**

Tom Mills, Brigadier General,  
CONG (Ret).

[meels52@msn.com](mailto:meels52@msn.com)

#### **EMPLOYER OUTREACH AREA CHAIRS**

##### Boulder/Longmont

Brad Gallup  
[Brad@Cable-Safe.com](mailto:Brad@Cable-Safe.com)

##### Colorado Springs

Willie Jones  
[willie.jones@usaa.com](mailto:willie.jones@usaa.com)

##### Cortez Area

Robert Valencia  
[relampagosvt@msn.com](mailto:relampagosvt@msn.com)

##### Denver Area South

John Weksler  
[j.weksler@comcast.net](mailto:j.weksler@comcast.net)

##### Denver Area North

Michael Mitchel  
[michael@oc-consulting.com](mailto:michael@oc-consulting.com)

##### Douglas County Area

Lorin Ricker  
[Lorin@RickerNet.us](mailto:Lorin@RickerNet.us)

Bob Rotruck  
[ole.gunner.bob@gmail.com](mailto:ole.gunner.bob@gmail.com)

##### Estes Park Area Chair

Gary Brown  
[hongrb24@gmail.com](mailto:hongrb24@gmail.com)

##### Fort Collins

Robert Fryer  
[robert.fryer@ocio.usda.gov](mailto:robert.fryer@ocio.usda.gov)

##### Grand Junction

Lou Brackett  
[patriot08@bresnan.net](mailto:patriot08@bresnan.net)

##### Pueblo

Harry Vogel  
[hotspot58@cs.com](mailto:hotspot58@cs.com)