



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 ESGR LAUNCHES NEW EFFORT TO ASSIST STUDENT VETERANS ATTENDING COLORADO COLLEGES AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

With over 21,000 veterans enrolled in colleges and higher education programs across the state, Colorado ESGR is launching a new effort



to provide these veterans with the tools to make their higher education experience a successful one along with matching them with perspective future employers. Our student veterans face many challenges with the national graduation rate of those attending under the G.I. Bill is a dismal 3%. Many veterans do not stay beyond their first year and statistics show an increase in

student veterans suicides during their second year. This month Colorado ESGR is kicking off a program to work with student veterans across the state with three primary goals:

- 1) Provide tools and coaching to veterans to increase the chances of them successfully completing their programs;
- 2) Create opportunities for mentorship and internships between businesses and students and;
- 3) Create placement opportunities for graduates with partner businesses.

***“These endeavors,”*** retired Rear Admiral Dick Young, State ESGR Chair said, ***“are exactly the sort of efforts our some 160 dedicated ESGR Volunteers will be working on.”*** ***By the statistics available to ESGR, about 9% of these Colorado students are in the Guard and Reserve, and with the strong emphasis on ESGR assisting in helping veterans get employment, this effort is clearly one ESGR needs to take on.”***



National Site News and Information

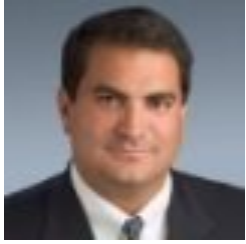


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Colorado's ESGR Electronic Newsletter is published not only for the information and benefit of the members of the Colorado ESGR but most importantly to our Guard and Reserve members and their employers. The contents of this newsletter highlight activities 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)



Izzy Abbass, a veteran himself and Commander of VFW Post No. 1, is leading this effort. ***“Veterans bring real work experience in addition to a college degree giving them a step above their non-veteran classmates,”*** stated Coordinator Abbass. ***“Veterans understand task management, working in team environments and being held responsible for their actions. These men and women have valuable skills that we can match to the needs of our business partners”*** Abbass added.

Working with student veterans provides an opportunity to take a more proactive role in working with our employer partners. By fostering a pool of graduates with degrees enhanced by real experience, our partners get stronger hires who can adapt to new situations. Our student veterans get the opportunity to work with employers who will value their military experience, and for those still in the Guard/Reserve, an employer who supports their continued service in defense of our nation. It truly is a win-win all around. Colorado ESGR is looking for those who are seriously interested in helping with this program.

If you are one, please contact Izzy Abbass at [izzy@vfwpost1.org](mailto:izzy@vfwpost1.org), or [dickyoung123@gmail.com](mailto:dickyoung123@gmail.com).



Today’s veterans face tremendous obstacles in their path of attaining a college degree. These challenges range from a missing sense of camaraderie to a lack of understanding by university faculty and peers. When coupled with the visible and invisible wounds of war, a college degree seems to be an elusive goal for men and women returning from military service. Student Veterans of America (SVA) makes that goal a reality.



SALUTE, INC. passionately pursues meeting the financial, physical and emotional needs of the military service members, veterans and their families. We strive to raise awareness of their sacrifices and provide a safety net to ensure every military family is treated with honor and dignity.

*Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, honored 15 employers September 22nd with the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Prior to the ceremony, recipients met privately with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. During this meeting, the recipients presented Secretary Panetta with the first Statement of Support signed under his watch.*

**Front left, Mr. David McGinnis, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and Mr. Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense hold a Statement of Support signed by all 15 recipients of the 2011 Freedom Award.**



CEO and President of CenturyLink - Glen Post, Back Row, first from right.

*Click on the photo to view the video of Qwest Communications, now CenturyLink, Inc. accepting the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.*



**Glen Post, CEO and President of Qwest/CenturyLink pictured with nominators of the award.**

## Qwest Communications, now CenturyLink, Inc.

**Wednesday, June 08, 2011**

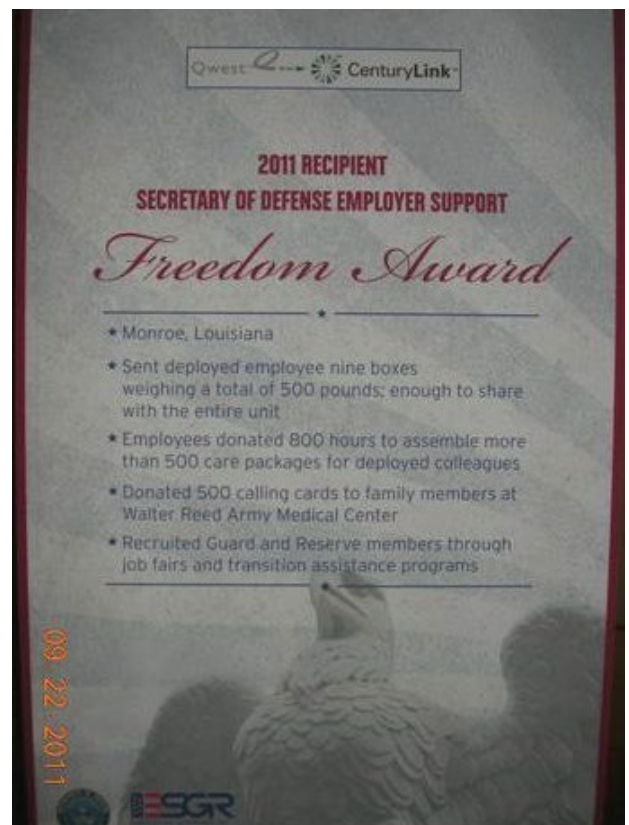
Qwest Communications of Denver, Colorado, acquired by CenturyLink, Inc., of Monroe, Louisiana this past March, was nominated for the Freedom Award the past five years and named a semi-finalist in 2006 and 2010.

This year, Qwest received nine nominations from its Guard and Reserve employees who were thankful for the personalized support they received from the company, which included Qwest's CEO recognizing military employees through company-wide emails that acknowledged and thanked them for their service to the nation. In addition, Qwest employees donated 800 hours to assemble more than 500 care packages for their deployed colleagues.

One Marine employed by Qwest said he received nine boxes weighing a total of 500 pounds that he shared with his entire unit. Qwest also donated 500 calling cards to family members at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Qwest's "People Care Team," an ombudsman team for Guardsmen, Reservists, supervisors, families, and Qwest Vets, distributed VA benefits information to service members within the company. Qwest recruited Guard and Reserve members using job fairs and transition assistance programs and became active in the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces program. "When I was deployed, my direct supervisor called and emailed me and my wife multiple times, offering his support and sending care packages," said nominator Sergeant First Class Matthew W. McGuire, U.S. Army National Guard, back at work in Dublin, Ohio. "I nominated Qwest because of its support for service member employees."



Left, Dr. Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Affairs and right, David McGinnis, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs present the Freedom Award to Glen Post, CEO Qwest/CenturyLink.





ARLINGTON, Va. – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, honored 15 employers September 22nd with the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Prior to the ceremony, recipients met privately with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. During this meeting, the recipients presented Secretary Panetta with the first Statement of Support signed under his watch.

By signing a Statement of Support, this year's 15 recipients join employers in pledging that::

- \*We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment 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 crises and in war.

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. This year's honorees range from a small church in South Dakota, to two sheriff's departments, to major automotive, technology, and banking corporations. The recipients were honored by senior Department of Defense officials during the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony.

Since September 11, 2001, over 820,000 Guard and Reserve have been activated, with almost one-half of the total U.S. military strength residing in the Guard and Reserve. Employers across America continue to provide significant support to their employees in the Guard and Reserve, despite ongoing combat operations and reduced workforces during an uncertain economy. This year more than 4,000 Guard and Reserve members nominated employers for exceptional support.

### This year's recipients are - by Employer Location

- 3M St. Paul, Minn.
- Ameren Corporation St. Louis, Mo.
- Burt County Sheriff's Office Tekamah, Neb.
- CSX Transportation Jacksonville, Fla.
- Electrical Contractors, Inc. Omaha, Neb.
- Ford Motor Company Dearborn, Mich.
- Hanson Professional Services Inc. Springfield, Ill.
- Integrity Applications Incorporated Chantilly, Va.
- Orange County Sheriff's Department Santa Ana, Calif.
- Qwest Communications, Denver, Colo., now CenturyLink, Inc. Monroe, La.**
- St. John's Lutheran Church Yankton, S.D.
- State Employees' Credit Union Raleigh, N.C.
- The Principal Financial Group Des Moines, Iowa
- Town of Gilbert Gilbert, Ariz.
- Wells Fargo & Company San Francisco, Calif.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 19, 2011

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## **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week Proclaimed by President**

*Proclamation salutes service members and expresses gratitude to employers*

ARLINGTON, Va. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, announced President Barack Obama has signed a proclamation declaring September 18 – 24, 2011 as National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week.

In the 10 years of continuous military operations since September 11, 2001, employers across the Nation have remained committed to supporting their employees who serve in the military. National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week is a time to honor those who serve in the Guard and Reserve while giving thanks to their employers, whose support is a critical component of our national defense.

“The United States is at its strongest when we live up to our sacred duty to honor and care for our service members when they come home. The support of employers across our country reflects the best of the American spirit -- the understanding that we are bound together to serve and protect our Nation,” said President Obama. “I call upon all Americans to join me in expressing our heartfelt thanks to the members of the National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers.”

Nearly half of our military strength resides in the Guard and Reserve. The dedication of employers, who implement personnel policies promoting Guard and Reserve participation, while bearing financial and organizational burdens, allows mission-ready troops to serve when activated. Service members leave home with the comfort of knowing their families will have much needed support before and after mobilization.

In concert with National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, the Department of Defense will recognize 15 of the nation's most supportive employers at the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony on September 22. The Freedom Award is DoD's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. The 15 employers stood out from a field of 4,049 nominations submitted by Guardsmen and Reservists.

**The Presidential Proclamation can be read at: <http://1.usa.gov/ESGRProc>**

### **About ESGR:**

*Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.*

## Medal of Honor Ceremony - September 17, 2011



President Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to Dakota Meyer, a former active duty Marine Corps Corporal from Kentucky. Sergeant Meyer was recognized for his courageous actions at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on September 8, 2009. He is the third living recipient - and the first Marine - to be awarded the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan. And at 23, he is also one of the youngest recipients in decades.

The President, who first met Meyer when they shared a beer at the White House on Wednesday evening, said that, "in Sergeant Dakota Meyer, we see the best of a generation that has served through a decade of war."

Meyer saved 36 lives during a Taliban ambush in repeated acts of bravery, tales of which the President noted, "will be told for generations."

I want you to imagine it's September 8, 2009, just before dawn. A patrol of Afghan forces and their American trainers is on foot, making their way up a narrow valley, heading into a village to meet with elders. And suddenly, all over the village, the lights go out. And that's when it happens. About a mile away, Dakota, who was then a corporal, and Staff Sergeant Juan Rodriguez-Chavez, could hear the ambush over the radio. It was as if the whole valley was exploding. Taliban fighters were unleashing a firestorm from the hills, from the stone houses, even from the local school.

And soon, the patrol was pinned down, taking ferocious fire from three sides. Men were being wounded and killed, and four Americans -- Dakota's friends -- were surrounded. Four times, Dakota and Juan asked permission to go in; four times they were denied. It was, they were told, too dangerous. But one of the teachers in his high school once said, "When you tell Dakota he can't do something, he's is going to do it." And as Dakota said of his trapped teammates, "Those were my brothers, and I couldn't just sit back and watch."

The story of what Dakota did next will be told for generations. He told Juan they were going in. Juan jumped into a Humvee and took the wheel; Dakota climbed into the turret and manned the gun. They were defying orders, but they were doing what they thought was right. So they drove straight into a killing zone, Dakota's upper body and head exposed to a blizzard of fire from AK-47s and machine guns, from mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

Coming upon wounded Afghan soldiers, Dakota jumped out and loaded each of the wounded into the Humvee, each time exposing himself to all that enemy fire. They turned around and drove those wounded back to safety. Those who were there called it the most intense combat they'd ever seen. Dakota and Juan would have been forgiven for not going back in. But as Dakota says, you don't leave anyone behind.

For a second time, they went back -- back into the inferno; Juan at the wheel, swerving to avoid the explosions all around them; Dakota up in the turret -- when one gun jammed, grabbing another, going through gun after gun. Again they came across wounded Afghans. Again Dakota jumped out, loaded them up and brought them back to safety.

For a third time, they went back -- insurgents running right up to the Humvee, Dakota fighting them off. Up ahead, a group of Americans, some wounded, were desperately trying to escape the bullets raining down. Juan wedged the Humvee right into the line of fire, using the vehicle as a shield. With Dakota on the guns, they helped those Americans back to safety as well.

For a fourth time, they went back. Dakota was now wounded in the arm. Their vehicle was riddled with bullets and shrapnel. Dakota later confessed, "I didn't think I was going to die. I knew I was." But still they pushed on, finding the wounded, delivering them to safety.

And then, for a fifth time, they went back -- into the fury of that village, under fire that seemed to come from every window, every doorway, every alley. And when they finally got to those trapped Americans, Dakota jumped out. And he ran toward them. Drawing all those enemy guns on himself. Bullets kicking up the dirt all around him. He kept going until he came upon those four Americans, laying where they fell, together as one team.

Dakota and the others who had joined him knelt down, picked up their comrades and -- through all those bullets, all the smoke, all the chaos -- carried them out, one by one. Because, as Dakota says, "That's what you do for a brother."

Dakota says he'll accept this medal in their name. So today, we remember the husband who loved the outdoors -- Lieutenant Michael Johnson. The husband and father they called "Gunny J" -- Gunnery Sergeant Edwin Johnson. The determined Marine who fought to get on that team -- Staff Sergeant Aaron Kenefick. The medic who gave his life tending to his teammates -- Hospitalman Third Class James Layton. And a soldier wounded in that battle who never recovered -- Sergeant First Class Kenneth Westbrook.

## Employers - We Want You to Become Part of Our Team!

### Why is employer support important?

Almost half of our military force resides in the Reserve Component which is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve. The men and women who serve in the Reserve Component are unique in that they also have civilian employers. Support of America's employers and the employees they share with the nation ensures the viability of the all-volunteer force, and thus our national security.



### Employers Become an ESGR volunteer!

Our dedicated volunteers come from all walks of life. We are business executives, civic leaders, retired military and patriotic citizens.

Your involvement, with as little as a few hours a month, can improve the employer relations of the brave men and women that place themselves in harms way, leave their families and put their careers on hold as they preserve our way of life.

**Are you a Human Resources Professional? A supervisor with many years of experience in the private or public sector?**

**Are you a professional mediator? A lawyer? Have an interest in helping to resolve issues in the workplace between our military and their civilian employers?**

**Are you someone who wants to help our Guard and Reserve?**

**Are you someone who wants to help our businesses recruit Guard & Reserve members?**

Some of our volunteer activities include the following:

**Employer Outreach:** Develop relationships with employers to promote advocacy for service in the National Guard and Reserve.

**Ombudsman:** Assist in preventing, reducing or resolving employer or service member misunderstandings regarding employment rights and responsibilities.

**Public Affairs:** ESGR Public Affairs volunteers work with military and civilian media organizations to promote public understanding of the ESGR mission.

**Military Outreach:** Inform and educate members of the National Guard and Reserve regarding their employment rights and responsibilities under USERRA.



**Mission, Vision, Values Our Mission**

Veterans Green Jobs’ mission is to engage, transition and connect military veterans with meaningful employment opportunities that serve our communities and environment.

**Our Vision**

The vision of Veterans Green Jobs is that all military veterans will obtain meaningful employment in jobs that offer:

- The security of sustainable income for themselves and their families
- The opportunity for professional advancement
- A sense of personal fulfillment and purpose
- Encouragement and support in being valued leaders and contributors in their chosen fields

Veterans Green Jobs is dedicated to helping all veterans transition into successful career paths by focusing on opportunities in stable economic sectors related to, for example:

Environmental restoration, natural resources conservation and sustainability

- Clean energy and renewable energy and related technologies
- Energy efficiency and energy conservation
- Energy independence and energy security

**Our Values**

As a company and as individuals, we value integrity, personal excellence, innovation, mutual respect and collaboration. We are committed to veterans and the communities we serve, and to those who share our passion for a greener, more economically viable and sustainable future. We take pride in our partners and employees who work hard to make this mission-oriented organization a success by honoring their contributions, experiences and strengths every day. We value realistic goal-setting, and we leverage our compassion for people and the environment to make our work meaningful with lasting impact.

**Veterans Green Jobs’ Mission**

To engage, transition and connect military veterans with meaningful employment opportunities that serve our communities and environment.

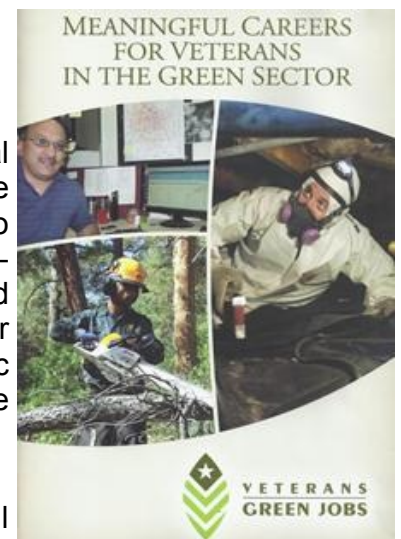
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## EVENTS CALENDAR

### OCTOBER

- 8 **New Volunteer Training, Area Chair Meeting, Centennial, Co**
- 11 **Fort Carson - Career Opportunity Day**

### NOVEMBER

- 1 **Freedom Award Nominations Open**
- 5-6 **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](http://ESGR.PatriotAwardNomination.com).

Another way for you to recognize your employer is through the **Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award**. 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 National Guard and Reserve. The award was created to publicly recognize employers who provide exceptional support to their National Guard and Reserve employees. It is the highest in a series of employer recognition awards given by the Department of Defense. Freedom Award winners from Colorado include First Data Corporation, Newmont Mining and Qwest/CenturyLink.

**Nominations will be accepted starting November 1, 2011.**

For more information, visit  
[www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil)  
[www.ESGR.com](http://www.ESGR.com)

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