



# Season's Greetings

## Message from the Chairman



It's hard to believe that we are beginning a new year---2012. Thanks to our members (both full-time staff and volunteers), 2011 has been another successful year for the Texas ESGR.

We have much to be thankful for in our lives. While you enjoy the Christmas holidays, I ask that you take the time to pause and remember those who have sacrificed and served, and those who continue to do so, that we may spend these holidays in the peaceful company of our friends and loved ones. All too often, we take the gifts of freedom and democracy for granted. Remember that the blessings, abundance and opportunities we enjoy here in America come with a price. So, as you spend time with your families and friends, please keep in your thoughts and prayers the men and women of our Armed Forces---especially those deployed

far from home, separated from family and friends by the call of duty. In Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, these courageous Americans are fighting the enemies of freedom and protecting us from danger. They and their families are making many sacrifices and we should all be deeply grateful.

Additionally, please remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and ask for God's blessing on their loved ones. We also ask for God to watch over our men and women in uniform who are deployed in harm's way and assure their safe return.

Thanks for all that you do and have a great Christmas and a joyous New Year. God bless America.

Dr. Jerry D. Icenhower, P.E.  
Chairman, Texas ESGR



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Jerry Icenhower

#### Vice Chair

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#### Executive Director

John Steele

#### Military Outreach

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#### Ombudsman Director

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#### Awards

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Bill Cyrus

#### Northern Region Director

Marshall Scantlin

#### Southern Region Director

Vic Ortiz

#### Western Region Director

Wendell Wilbanks

Mailing Address: Texas ESGR,  
PO Box 5218, Austin TX 78763  
(512) 782-5858

### Jos Portman Named ESGR Ombudsman of the Year

Jos Portmann was selected as ESGR's "Ombudsman Volunteer of the Year" and invited with the other national volunteer award recipients to attend the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards ceremonies in Washington D.C. Congratulations to Jos for his outstanding service to the Texas ESGR Committee.

### Hero2Hired (H2H)

H2H.jobs is a comprehensive employment program with a powerful job search site and online community that is 100% free for veterans, service members and employers. It contains job listings, career exploration tools, education and training resources, advice and tips, and networking opportunities. H2H's goal is to reduce the number of RC service members who are unemployed by helping them find jobs. Military-friendly companies can post job openings, search for candidates and invite them to apply.

### Inside this issue:

Chairman's Message	1
SoS's Signed	2
Freedom Award	3
ANG Employer Day	4
Pro Patria Nominations	
2012 Annual Conference Registration Form	5



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## Congressman Silvestre Reyes signs Statement of Support at Texas "Patriotic Promise" Event



U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes (seated), 16th District of Texas, signed a Statement of Support at the "Patriotic Promise" Veteran Recruiting Symposium in El Paso, Texas. Standing to his left is Mr. Rafael Garcia, local ESGR Area Chair. Congressman Reyes opened the symposium with words of encouragement to the local El Paso employers and human resource professionals in attendance. "Our veterans of today are great prospective employees for any company or any employer. They bring loyalty, skills, and a commitment to excellence. This symposium is important and very timely."

The Patriotic Promise symposiums are a joint effort between Texas ESGR and the Texas State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management to educate employers on how to better recruit and hire veterans, as well as serving Guardsmen and Reservists. Among the organizations participating in the El Paso symposium were the Texas Veterans Leadership Program, the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, the Army National Guard's Job Connection Education Program, Texas A&M's "Tex Vet" Initiative, the U.S. Veterans Chamber of Commerce, the Texas Veterans Commission, and the Fort Bliss Army Career and Alumni Program. This was the fourth such Texas symposium held in 2011.



[www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-ESGR/198357570203626](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-ESGR/198357570203626)

## Staples Signs Statement of Support

Ms. Catharine Girouard signed an ESGR Statement of Support indicating her support of the Guard and Reserve employees of Staples, Inc., Store #1903, Webster, Texas. Ms. Girouard is the General Manager of the store. Shown left to right in the photo is: Ms. Kim Woods (ESGR), Ms. Renda Abrams (Staples, Inc., Dallas, TX), Ms. Catherine Girouard (General Manager, Staples, Inc, Webster, TX), Mr. Bill Cyrus (ESGR Eastern Regional Director), Dr. Jerry Icenhower (Chairman, Texas ESGR) and Mr. Rusty Woods (ESGR).





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## ESGR Launches Nomination Season for 2012 Secretary of Defense Employers Support Freedom Award

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, is now accepting nominations for the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the DoD's highest award for civilian employers supporting Guard and Reserve members.

The DoD encourages all Guard and Reserve members to nominate employers who have provided exceptional support of their military service. Nominations may be submitted by service members, or a family member acting on their behalf, at [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil) through January 16, 2012.

"Employers who go above and beyond in their support of Guard and Reserve members are providing a tremendous service to our country; they are contributing to the resiliency and peace of mind of the more than one million men and women who stand ready to serve when our nation calls on them," said David McGinnis, acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. "Guard and Reserve members who feel their employers have gone the extra mile in supporting their military service should nominate them for the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award to show their appreciation and highlight their support as an example for others to follow."

With employer support acknowledged as a critical component of our national defense, ESGR enhanced the nomination website this year to help guide nominators in capturing the most important details of their employers' support. Previous recipients garnered recognition for supportive measures including organizing colleagues to provide dinners to a deployed employee's family, covering extra shifts during an employee's military training, taking a deployed service member's children to sports practices and other family events, and establishing robust military support networks.



### Quick Response (QR) Code

Scan the Code to be taken to the Texas ESGR Website. All you need is a camera phone or similar device equipped with the correct reader application that can scan the image of the QR Code. This Code links readers to our website.

How to use it?

1. Download a mobile application that allows you to scan the QR Code
2. Open the application that allows you to take a picture of the QR Code
3. Once scanned, information from QR will appear and be easily accessible



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### 136th Airlift Wing's Employer Day



The 136th Airlift Wing, Texas Air National Guard, and the Texas ESGR Committee hosted a Employer Day at the Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base. The event included a orientation flight on a C-130 Hercules, a status briefing from the command, a tour of the facilities, lunch (Bar-B-Q, of course), and an ESGR presentation. Many of the employers brought along their service member employees to help explain their duties and responsibilities while serving with the unit. A number of community leaders and employers were in attendance and gained a greater appreciation for the Reserve Component.

### Pro Patria Award Nominations Now Open

The Texas ESGR Committee is now accepting nominations for the Pro Patria Award through January 10, 2012. The "Pro Patria Award" is presented annually by the Texas ESGR Committee to the employer who has provided the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.



Here are some examples of what America's most supportive employers do. Consider these examples in writing the narrative of your nomination form, citing as many ways as may apply, and include other ways your employer supports your service.

- Maintains contact with Guard & Reserve employees while they are on annual training or mobilized
- Participates in ESGR programs (SoS signings, Employer Briefings, Bosslifts, and others)
- Publicly acknowledges the contributions of Reserve component employees to our Nation's defense
- Sponsors a company Guard & Reserve recognition day
- Features Guardsmen and Reservists on Company bulletin boards, in newsletters or at meetings
- Supports Guard & Reserve employees beyond USERRA law requirements
- Has a published leave policy and/or a military mobilization policy
- Provides pay differential during periods of military training, mobilizations, and/or paid military leave
- Provides continuation of insurance and monetary benefits during mobilizations
- Supports Guard & Reserve employee families during mobilizations
- Assigns a company sponsor to families of Guard & Reserve employees that have been deployed.
- Holds informational meeting and offers other means of communication for family members of Guard & Reserve employees who have been deployed

We're on the web: [www.txesgr.net](http://www.txesgr.net)



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**2012 Texas ESGR Annual Planning & Awards Conference (APAC)**

**Radisson Hotel & Suites-Town Lake in Austin, Texas**

**March 22-23, 2012**

**\*\*\*ESGR Volunteer Registration Form\*\*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (MI)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

ESGR Committee Area#: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*  
**REGISTRATION FEES:** All Texas ESGR Committee Volunteers must pay a registration fee based on their distance from Austin, which includes attendance at the Thursday awards dinner and Friday breakfast (choose only one registration fee below). This fee will be reimbursed via your official travel voucher. All ombudsmen should plan to attend the Friday training lunch as well. Additional tickets for the special events may be purchased for spouses or guests at the prices listed below. **(NOTE: If you have any special dietary needs, please let us know soonest.)**

**Volunteer Registration Fee (if traveling MORE than 50 miles to Austin) \$67.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Volunteer Registration Fee (if traveling LESS than 50 miles to Austin) \$9.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Ombudsmen Lunch Fee (training for Ombudsmen ONLY - all attending should pay) \$1.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Additional Event Tickets for Spouses/Guests only (i.e. any non-ESGR volunteers attending):

Awards Banquet and Program, March 22<sup>nd</sup> \$41.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Breakfast & Awards Program, March 23<sup>rd</sup> \$17.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fees & Additional Tickets – Total Payment Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please mail this form with your payment to the Austin ESGR office (address at very bottom). Make your check or money order payable to: **TMFSF** (Texas Military Forces Support Foundation). **Registration forms must be received in Austin by March 1, 2012.** (NOTE: No refunds will be possible after March 1, 2012.)

**LODGING:** All conference events are at the Radisson Hotel & Suites-Town Lake, located at 111 Cesar Chavez in Austin. Hotel reservations can be made by calling the Radisson Reservations at (800) 333-3333 (tell them you are with the “*Nat’l Guard Assoc. of Texas*” to get the \$104.00 group rate). To make hotel reservations on-line, go to <http://radisson16-px.trvlclick.com/austintx>, enter your info into the brown “Check Rates & Availability” box then click on “More Search Options” in the same brown box. Enter promotion code “**Guard**” to get the \$104.00 rate.

**\*Reservations must be made by February 24, 2012 to receive the \$104 lodging rate, but please don’t delay.\***

**PARKING:** The hotel offers both a self-parking garage and valet parking. Valet parking is NOT a reimbursable expense for this conference. Overnight guests will be charged \$13 per night on their lodging bill for self-parking (reimbursable). Local volunteers should use self-parking and bring their ticket inside where it will be validated daily by ESGR staff.

**PREFERRED ATTIRE:** Thurs. Awards Dinner – Business Dress (coat & tie). All other events – Business Casual.

**TRAVEL:** ESGR Volunteers residing 50 or more miles from Austin will be placed on Invitational Travel Orders and reimbursed for lodging, meals & incidental expenses, hotel self-parking and POV mileage or commercial airfare. Volunteers residing within 50 miles of the Radisson Hotel will be entitled to POV mileage for daily commuting.

**Circle Mode of Travel: Personal Vehicle OR Commercial Air**

**Circle ESGR Shirt Size: XS S M L XL XXL XXXL**

**Circle Shirt Sex: Male or Female**

Mail this form with your payment to: **Texas ESGR P.O. Box 5218 Austin, TX 78763-5218**

*Texas ESGR Electronic Newsletter* is published for the information and benefit of the members of the Texas ESGR and our partners. The contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense, but highlight activities and events conducted by Texas ESGR. Comments regarding this publication should be sent to Vee Villanueva at 817-386-7326 or vee@txesgr.net