



Message from the Chairman



FY11 has been a busy year for the Texas Committee. Each of our five Regions has made progress in the Employment Initiative Program (EIP), particularly the Southern Region under the direction of BG (ret) Vic Ortiz. We need to continue this focus to assure returning Guardsmen and Reservists find employment as they transition back into civilian life.

However, while we focus on the EIP mission, we must continue to accomplish our other primary missions---ombudsman, military outreach and employer outreach. And we must also continue our efforts in obtaining Statements of Support from employers. Texas has been assigned a goal of 2800 Statements of Support for FY12. This is 97% of our FY11 goal. In order to achieve this goal, we must approach both small employers with few locations and large employers with numerous locations.

During FY11, our efforts in obtaining Statements of Support provided a great deal of positive visibility. The number of Statements of Support obtained speaks volumes about us

and our engagement with employers. This, coupled with our Bosslifts, Briefings with the Boss and our awards program solidifies our credibility as a substantial and effective organization within ESGR and the Department of Defense. A new Statement of Support was introduced during September at the National Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. This new Statement of Support sports the seven seals and includes an extra bullet targeting employment. In addition, we may now reach out to employers that previously signed a Statement of Support to reaffirm their support with the added employment emphasis. This reaffirmation not only counts toward our state goals, but also directly supports our Employment Initiative Program which, as I addressed previously, is still a priority mission.

Thank you for everything you do each day to support our service members, their families and civilian employers. And please remember to observe Veterans Day during November .

God Bless Texas!

Dr. Jerry D. Icenhower, P.E.
Major General (retired)
Chairman, Texas ESGR

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San Antonio Hosts First Employer Initiative Program Job Fair

Texas Committee for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve co-sponsored a military community job fair, which was part of a special initiative to get veterans back to work. The Job Fair offered classes on resume writing and interviewing. Employers interviewed qualified candidates on the spot.

Tax Benefits for Employers

Federal tax benefits may be available to employers that hire veterans under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Employers can receive up to a \$2,400 tax credit if they hire:

- a veteran who is a member of a family that has received food stamp benefits for at least three consecutive months in the 15 months prior to the date of hire; or
- a veteran with a disability who is participating in a vocational rehabilitation program through the U.S. Veterans Administration.

Employers also can receive a WOTC tax credit of up to \$4,800 for veterans entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability who:

- were hired within one year of having been discharged or released from activity duty; or
- have been unemployed for any six of the last 12 months.

Employers hiring multiple WOTC-qualified employees can see a significant reduction in their federal income taxes. These benefits are explained and claimed on IRS Form 5884.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Employers have 28 days from the date of hire to claim tax credits.

Other programs may benefit employers, such as the:

- Federal Welfare-to-Work Hiring Credit up to \$8,500 over a two-year employment period if the employee was receiving welfare benefits prior to finding employment; and

Mentor-Protégé Program allows certain government contractors to receive reimbursements for training/incidental costs associated with training physically

Volunteer Leadership Recognized



The following volunteers were recognized during the Executive Committee meeting held in Austin, TX. Pictured left to right are: Wilmer Roberts, Frank Bertone, Jerry Icenhower, Rodney McNelley, George Dresser, and Jules Franklin. Bertone, Dresser, and Franklin were presented the Seven Seals Award for the dedicated service to ESGR. Roberts and McNelley were given special medal sets for their contributions to the Texas Committee.

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: _____
Date: _____

Samuel G. Bekholtz
National Chair, ESGR

Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense

ESGR
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

NEW STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

ESGR National Committee introduced the new Statement of Support with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's signature during the National Leadership and Freedom Award Week in September. Volunteers are now able to reach out to employers that previously signed an SoS to reaffirm their support for our service members and directly supports our Employment Initiative Program.



Message from New Executive Director

The Way Ahead for Fiscal Year 2012

First of all, I would like to begin by saying that I am very excited about the opportunity to serve as Texas ESGR's new Executive Director. I have met many of you in my previous volunteer capacity, and I look forward to working with you in my new position. As we begin this new fiscal year (FY2012), I would like to call to your attention to a few important items such as our new Operating Plan, the updated Statement of Support, and a change in how we process volunteer travel.

Our FY2012 Operating Plan was approved by our Executive Committee during last July's meeting and became effective on October 1, 2011. It will be distributed via email to all Texas ESGR members shortly, and I encourage everyone to take the time to review it. In addition to our traditional missions, there is continued emphasis on facilitat-

ing the civilian career transitions of our Reserve Component service members through the Employment Initiative Program (EIP). As the year progresses, please consider how you can support our state's EIP activities. ESGR National recently released the new Statement of Support (SoS) form. In addition to having the seven Reserve Component seals and Secretary of Defense Panetta's signature, it includes new language that asks employers to recognize the unique skills service members possess and to consider hiring Guardsmen, Reservists, and veterans themselves. Another change to the SoS program is the shift from simply "attaining" employer support to "sustaining" it. In summary, we can now ask employers who have previously signed the older SoS form to sign the newest version, and Texas ESGR will receive the same "credit" as if it were an initial SoS signing. Expect further

guidance and some tools to help you target these employers in late October or early November. Finally, according to a new DoD policy, all official ESGR volunteer travel requiring airline transportation must be booked through the Defense Travel System (DTS). This means volunteers will no longer be able to make their own airline reservations and expect to be reimbursed. If you are scheduled for ESGR training or events that requires airline travel, please contact Julie Vasquez in the Austin office for assistance. Because of the efforts of our volunteers, FY2012 should be a banner year for Texas ESGR. Please do not hesitate to contact the Austin, Fort Worth, or Houston offices if we can assist you in any way.

John H. Steele
Executive Director



First Multi-Service Yellow Ribbon Event Held



More than 900 soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and coast guard members and their families made history when they attended the country's first multi-Service Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event in Dallas-Ft Worth in August. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program was initiated by Congress in 2008, and offers ac-

cess to information, resources and benefits to National Guard and Reserve service members and their families before, during and after deployments. More than 800,000 Guard and Reserve members have been activated since 2001, and more than 92,000 are currently activated in support of military operations. The impact of ten

years of war has leaders at all levels concerned about the effects on service members and their families, particularly when it comes to topics like combat stress, financial management, employment and health care.

NATIONAL ESGR COMMITTEE CHARTER – A BRIEF HISTORY

An article in a 1998 NCESGR Fact Sheet provides us with a glimpse of our history – “When the end of the draft was initially anticipated, defense planners foresaw a potential problem with the nation’s reserve service members and their civilian employers. Long accustomed to National Guard and Reserve membership as an alternative to compulsory active-duty service, it was believed that employers might question the necessity of service in a purely voluntary military system. The planners concluded that many employers would not be supportive of their workers voluntarily serving in uniform.

The Department of Defense chartered an organization in 1972 to ensure conflicts between part-time military duties and full-time civilian career responsibilities would be minimized. The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR) was created (nearly 40 years ago) to inform employers of the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve and to explain the necessity for – and role of – these forces in National Defense.”

Today, our role is even more important. Our mission – “ to promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees” is more difficult with the increased reliance of our Guard and Reserve. The move from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve resulted in increasing demands on our service members, their families and their employers. Remember to thank the employer for their support and sacrifice in providing a vital resource to our National Defense.

(Continued from page 1)



The Job Fair attracted over 80 employers, about 1,500 job-seekers, and over 400 individuals attended the classes offered free of charge. Even though final hiring figures have not been finalized, the event was a successful endeavor. Southern Region volunteers that assisted with this Job Fair were: Robert Siller, Bill Manning, Bertie Alexander, Doug Dupre, Mike Kinkade, Chris Powers, Dick Porter, Vic Ortiz, Henry Canty, Caryl Hill, and Roland Keller.

Why is posting your Presidential Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) Credits Important?

The National ESGR Committee reports PVSA Credit hours to Congress as money saved by ESGR volunteers compared to the same services performed by paid employees. This increases ESGR’s visibility and value to Congress and the volume of PVSA credits is also used in planning the annual funding of ESGR programs and volunteers’ participation. Each PVSA hour is valued at about \$19.51 an hour; and, volunteers are rewarded with PVSA pins when contributing 100 or more hours a year.

We’re on the web:
www.txesgr.net

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