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Governor Scott urges employers to make *Hiring Florida's Heroes* their business

veterans.employflorida.com

Tallahassee, Fla. – Governor Rick Scott today joined business, military, veteran and workforce leaders during the annual Florida National Guard Day at the Capitol to launch a year-long effort aimed at connecting returning National Guardsmen and other veterans with job openings as Florida's economy continues to improve.

"These courageous men and women have served us with honor, and it is our turn to ensure veterans who are returning to civilian life have jobs when they come home," said Governor Scott. "We are calling on Florida's employers to give veterans strong consideration for available positions. With their proven leadership, skills and discipline, hiring Florida's heroes is a smart move for businesses and the right thing to do for our veterans and their families."

While the unemployment rate for Florida's overall veteran population is slightly lower than that of the population at large, the Florida National Guard estimates approximately 17 percent of returning soldiers and airmen are looking for work. In partnership with Florida's leading business organizations, the *Hiring Florida's Heroes* campaign aims to promote the availability of these returning veterans to Florida's employers and connect employers with a variety of resources to assist in the hiring process.

Employers interested in hiring veterans are encouraged to call the Employ Florida Marketplace hotline at (866) 352-2345 to connect with a workforce specialist in their area. The specialists can assist employers by posting job listings, assembling lists of qualified candidates and answering questions about available training options among other services. Employers also can visit the [Employ Florida Vets](http://EmployFloridaVets) web portal at veterans.employflorida.com to post job listings and view resumes.

"Florida's returning soldiers and airmen possess strong leadership skills, work with integrity and are solid private-sector job candidates," said Mark Wilson, president and CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce. "The Florida Chamber encourages private-sector businesses to honor these talented veterans by hiring our heroes."

Additionally, the state's workforce system — consisting of Workforce Florida Inc., the Department of Economic Opportunity, the state's 24 Regional Workforce Boards and nearly 100 One-Stop Career Centers — is working closely with the Florida National Guard, the state Department of Military Affairs and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide

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employment services to veterans who are looking for work and help employers access this exceptional talent pool. Since January 2011, workforce system partners have assisted 12,776 veterans with finding jobs, including 1,237 in the first three weeks of the new year.

“In my travels around the state, I have heard from many employers who appreciate the value veterans bring as employees. They want to do their part to support Florida’s military men and women,” said Sen. Don Gaetz, (R – Ft. Walton Beach). “With our economy improving, businesses growing and veterans returning from service overseas, now is the ideal time to ensure our state and business leaders are working together to get these men and women back to work here at home.”

Senator Gaetz has been a champion for efforts to assist Florida’s veterans and their families. Current legislation includes SB 922/HB 977, sponsored by Sen. Mike Bennett (R – Bradenton) and co-sponsored by Sen. Gaetz and others, which passed the Senate today. SB 922 creates a \$10,000 tax credit for employers who hire eligible Florida National Guardsmen, assists veterans’ employment efforts by expanding preferences given in state contracting to veteran-owned businesses, and requires that qualified veterans be admitted to any Florida College System institution of their choosing.

Business leaders attending the campaign kickoff — including the Florida Chamber, the Florida Retail Federation, Associated Industries of Florida, Florida United Businesses Association, the National Association of Independent Business, the Florida Council of 100, Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, the Florida Bankers Association and the Manufacturers Association of Florida — have committed to sharing the *Hiring Florida’s Heroes* message with members and promoting the value of veterans as employees through social media and other outreach efforts during the year-long campaign. The campaign also will help raise awareness of recently expanded federal tax credits of up to \$9,600 per veteran hired through the [Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#).

For more information, please visit veterans.employflorida.com or call the Employ Florida Marketplace hotline toll-free at (866) 352-2345.

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