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*A quarterly newsletter for
Iowa ESGR's dedicated volunteers*

Governor Culver Presents 2009 Iowa Freedom Awards - Signs proclamation designating Iowa Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve Week -

DES MOINES, Iowa – September 8, 2009 – Three Iowa employers received the Iowa Freedom Awards in a ceremony today with Governor Chet Culver, Dick Rue, chairman of the Iowa Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), and other ESGR officials. In addition, Governor Culver signed a Proclamation designating the week of Sept. 14-20 as Iowa Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week.

The Iowa Freedom Award recognizes the exemplary ways Iowa employers support their National Guard and Reserve employees. One award is presented to employers in three categories: large employer, small employer and the public sector.

Recipients of the 2009 Iowa Freedom Awards are:

- Small Employer: The Printer, Inc. – Des Moines, accepted by Mr Bill Benskin, CEO
- Large Employer: Decker Truck Lines – Fort Dodge, accepted by Mr. Tony Russell, Vice President & COO
- Public Sector: Iowa State Patrol Post 14 – Ottumwa, accepted by Colonel Patrick Hoye, Public Safety Chief



In addition to presenting the Iowa Freedom Awards, Governor Culver signed a Proclamation designating September 14 – 20 as Iowa Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week.

In signing the proclamation, Governor Culver said, “Iowa’s National Guard and Reserve forces serve our state and the country with distinction, responding when called upon on every front in overseas contingency operations, as well as to the humanitarian emergencies we experience in our own state. By supporting our guardsmen and reservists, employers across Iowa are also helping to advance freedom and democracy around the world. That’s why we’re proud to sign this proclamation today and to recognize these three Iowa companies with the Iowa Freedom Award.”

“We are proud of our National Guard and Reserve military members and in awe of the sacrifice they make for all of us,” said Dick Rue, chairman of the Iowa Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. “At the same time we recognize that employers are making sacrifices as well. This year’s Iowa Freedom Award recipients also received the Pro Patria award, the highest recognition given in Iowa by ESGR to employers for their support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. We thank Governor Culver for signing a Proclamation designating Iowa ESGR week because it is important that the support of all Iowa employers of Guard and Reserve members be recognized.”

Message from the State Chair:

It is my privilege and honor to assume the duties of State Chairman of the Iowa Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve as of October 1st, 2009. Before I offer any comments regarding our future I first wish to recognize and thank our outgoing Chairman, Barry Spear, for his 4 years of service, leadership and devotion to the State Committee. Barry changed the landscape of the Iowa Committee during his tenure and left us with a smooth running, mission focused organization. Thank you Barry.

Looking ahead, our State Committee will continue to embrace a “preventative” rather than “reactive” strategic approach to accomplish our mission. We have set forth three tactical areas of focus to chart our course. They are: Visibility, Area Leadership and achievement of National Metric Goals. Visibility will focus on our employer-focused Lunch & Learn programs, community speaking, strategic partnerships, ESGR name and resource recognition, and reaching out to our Guard and Reserve Component units with increased volunteer visits and briefings and engagement in the Yellow Ribbon Program. Area Leadership focus is intended to further empower our Area Chair’s throughout the state to take all actions necessary to accomplish our mission. To continue to bond our Area Chair’s into a cohesive group that communicates with and relies upon each other to share ideas and best practices and to further the sense of community that already exists. Metric Goals sound like a necessary burden at first glance. But in reality they are a mirror of what we are accomplishing as a team. They reflect the number of employer and military outreach events, the number of awards given, the number of Statement’s of Support signed, the number and timeliness of Ombudsman cases and the number of volunteer hours expended – they are in essence a reflection of what we do and we should embrace them and take pride in meeting and exceeding our goals.



Just in the last two months we have recruited several new volunteers that are filled with motivation and excitement about ESGR. I encourage all volunteers to seek out and mentor these new individuals; let’s make them feel part of the team!

We have an outstanding core of leadership within our State. They have impressed me with their leadership ability and their personal motivation. My personal philosophy is to let leaders lead and to be there for them when they need support. We have great leadership and you will have my support whenever you need it.

As we move into the year ahead we will have our mission cut out for us. Deployments do not appear to be reducing and may well increase with our overseas efforts escalating. Our employers are at risk of becoming “fatigued” by the reoccurring absence of their military employees. It is our job to educate them, be a resource and to re-energize their commitment whenever possible.

Thank you for your volunteerism, your passion for our mission and for your commitment to the men and women serving our country.

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE OFFICE OF ESGR

Thanks to all the great volunteers for the great work you are doing for our customers. Both groups have given us many thanks for the work you have been doing. We hear it everywhere we travel and we receive many phone calls thanking ESGR for the work you are doing. AGAIN THANKS.

The calendar is very busy this fall with the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) Conference kicking off our new fiscal year. We have several families briefing events and soldier briefing events set as well. We expect more of these events this coming year due to mobilizations that are on the horizon. Please make sure you are visiting with the commanders and unit leadership to present USERRA and ESGR to their members. Don't forget to mention our AWARDS program for employer's, the numbers are very low this year for the Patriotic Employer Awards. Soldiers just need to be told to go on-line to our website www.iowaesgr.org and put their employer in for an award. Ask them to write a narrative at the bottom of the on-line form. Narratives are part of the review process for higher level awards by our committee.

Please continue to submit your volunteer hours to Becky at the end of every month. We are gauged by what we do by the National ESGR office.

Our Annual training and awards conference for our Iowa ESGR Committee is on **April 9th and 10th 2010** at the West Des Moines Sheraton Inn. Please mark your calendars now to attend this important event.

Boss lift Update: Currently there will be major boss lift events for next summer (July/August timeframe). These will be overnight trips to Camp Ripley, Minnesota. While the exact flight plans and dates have not been laid out, we are anticipating that every area of the state should have a pick-up location during one of these two flights.

New Army Reserve Commander for the 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command

The new commander of the 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) took an opportunity to meet with the new State Chair and his staff for the Iowa Committee of Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) on August 19, 2009.

Brig. Gen. Mark Corson sat in with Iowa's new State Chair for ESGR, Dick Rue, State Vice Chair Rob Kelly, and Executive Director for the Iowa Committee for ESGR Al Enright to discuss how the Iowa ESGR team and the 103rd could best work together to benefit Iowa Army Reserve Soldiers and their employers.

"The Army Reserve is a big part of the area we cover. The biggest part is figuring out how we can assist and help you [the 103rd]." said Rue.

There are twelve Area Chairs for the ESGR in the State of Iowa, with the 103rd falling into the 4th Area, which is led by Carmine Boal of Ankeny.



Left to Right: ESGR Executive Director Al Enright, ESGR State Chair Richard Rue, BG Mark Corson, ESGR State Vice Chair Rob Kelly

"ESGR is bound by state borders; where the employer is located," said Enright, adding "if a Soldier drills in Missouri, but works in Iowa, we have authority over that."

Whenever possible, the local chairs like to speak about the Uniformed Service Members' Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), and the process for dealing with issues.

Though informal mediation is a function of ESGR, they would prefer to prevent issues by educating employers through luncheons, inviting them to pre-deployment briefings, and special events called "Boss Lifts" where supervisors are given a chance to ride in helicopters and see how we operate.

"Usually there's an issue that an ESGR ombudsman must attend to. This is an opportunity to reach out to the employer and show them the value of employing a Soldier." said Kelly.

Corson spoke of the challenges of employing service members, making a point that there's real value to the leadership and management skills our Soldiers learn, and most troops come back richer from the deployment experience, adding "There's been some 'war fatigue' on the part of the employers, and it's a concern."

Another tool to prevent issues is when the Soldier goes online to nominate their employer for a Patriot Award, or even put them in the running for an "Above and Beyond" award, which will be presented by one of their local volunteers.

"Any reserve component Soldier can go online and nominate their employer." said Rue.

Corson wishes to push a message out to employers that "The Army Reserve has the benefit of having skill sets which translate very well into civilian employees."

"We stress, within our staff and liaisons, to form relationships; that's how this gets done." said Rue.

(Note: The 103rd ESC supports units in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge, Council Bluffs, Waterloo, Sac City, Cherokee, and Sioux City)

ESGR Proclamation Signings & Media Coverage



Gov. Culver: Governor Culver presents 2009 Iowa freedom awards
IowaPolitics.com, 8 Sept. 09

Governor Culver presents 2009 Iowa freedom awards
State of Iowa website, 8 Sept. 09

Ottumwa employer receives Iowa Freedom Award
101.5 Kiss.fm, Ottumwa, IA, 8 Sept. 09

Award recognizes National Guard friendly Iowa employers
Gazetteonline, Cedar Rapids, IA, 8 Sept. 09

Culver honors firms for supporting troops
Sioux City Journal, Sioux City, IA 8 Sept. 09

Iowa freedom awards announced
Globe Gazette, Mason City, IA, 8 Sept. 09

City, county proclaim Sept. 13-19 ESGR Week
The Daily Nonpareil, Council Bluffs, IA 8 Sept. 09

Dubuque Area ESGR Week & employer SOS signing
Voices of the Tri States, KDTH-radio, Dubuque, IA. 11 Sept. 09

Local employers saluted for supporting soldiers
Dubuque Telegraph Herald and THOnline, Dubuque, IA, 12 Sept. 09

Sunday' Our View: Showing Support
Daily Nonpareil Online, Council Bluffs, IA, 13 Sept. 09

Three Iowa Employers Received Iowa Freedom Awards
The HawkEye 'Business Briefcase, Burlington, IA, 13 Sept. 09

Decker earns Iowa Freedom Award
The Messenger, Fort Dodge, IA, 13 Sept. 09

Businesses honored for support of National Guard
Radio Iowa, 15 Sept. 09

Troopers recognized for their big hearts
KTVO3, Ottumwa, IA 17 Sept. 09

Proclamation Signings: Bettendorf, Davenport, Muscatine, Clinton,
Tipton, Scott County
Area 9, IA, Sept. 09

Boss lifts



Patriotic Employer Awards



Area 9



Area 5



Area 4



Area 1



Area 11



Area 4