



HIRING OUR HEROES

IN THE HEADLINES | DECEMBER 2011

FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA PROVIDES KEYNOTE REMARKS AT U.S. CHAMBER'S FOURTH ANNUAL HIRING OUR HEROES EVENT

On November 10, 2011 the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, was the keynote speaker at the fourth annual Business Steps Up: Hiring Our Heroes event, which took place in the Hall of Flags at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In addition to hearing from the First Lady about a series of major private sector commitments that organizations have made for the Joining Forces initiative, Mr. John Strangfeld, the Chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc., discussed his company's efforts to create sustainable programs to improve career opportunities for veterans. The audience also heard from a panel of experts on the unique challenges that specific populations of veterans and military spouses face in their search for second careers.

"We are excited that we could bring together leaders from both the public and private sectors to recognize businesses that have gone above and beyond to employ talented veterans and military spouses, and to honor the tremendous sacrifices our military families make every day in service to our nation," said Thomas J. Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.



Hiring Our Heroes founder Kevin Schmiegel with First Lady Michelle Obama

Hiring our Heroes launched three strategic initiatives at the event, including: a grassroots campaign to engage the small business community; the establishment of a comprehensive IT system to support the hiring events the Chamber is conducting in local communities across the country; and the formation of a private sector Veterans Employment Advisory Council (VEAC) comprised of America's biggest employers across all industries and sectors.

The Advisory Council has been joined by industry leaders such as Prudential, CVS Caremark, and Entergy on the Chairman's Circle, as well as 3M, Walmart, Union Pacific, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Siemens, Ryder System, RecruitMilitary, PeopleScout, Navistar, Monster/Military.com, International Franchise Association, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), FedEx Express, Citigroup, and Chesapeake Energy Corporation. ★
—U.S. Chamber Press

Photo by Ian Wagreich / © U.S. Chamber of Commerce www.uschamber.com



DEDICATION OF THE LEE ANDERSON VETERANS CENTER | NOVEMBER 10, 2011

WhiteHouse.gov

100,000 New Jobs for Veterans and Military Families. Today, First Lady Michelle Obama was at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to talk about what private companies are doing to help military families.

Huffington Post

Michelle Obama, Industry Groups Set Politics Aside To Pledge 100,000 Jobs For Vets. First Lady Michelle Obama announced new, large scale public-private partnerships Thursday with two pro-business industry groups, the International Franchise Association and U.S. Chamber of Commerce—partnerships that, taken together, could help create job opportunities for 100,000 military veterans and their families.

The two groups will partner with the Joining Forces initiative, founded by the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden to support veterans and military families. During a launch event Thursday at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce headquarters, Mrs. Obama stressed the urgency of addressing unemployment among veterans.



Lee Anderson Family, Susan and Dan Christman

Chicago Tribune

Business Steps Up On Thursday, at an event hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the First Lady cheered a pledge from the business community to hire 100,000 veterans and military spouses by 2014. 'This is about who we are as individuals and as a country,' she said of efforts to help unemployed veterans.



General Martin Dempsey, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Examiner

Chamber's Donohue Touts "Hiring Our Heroes" Initiative

U.S. Chamber President Tom Donohue writes, "Nationwide, 1 million veterans are out of work. A staggering 27% of young veterans aged 18 to 24 are unemployed. And as forces are drawn down in Iraq and Afghanistan, tens of thousands of servicemembers will separate from the military and enter the civilian workforce." Donohue asserts that "the case for hiring our heroes is an easy one," and says "one of the biggest challenges facing veterans is demonstrating how the skills they've honed in the military are transferable to civilian work."

In 2011, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce expanded its efforts to lower unemployment among former service members and their spouses by partnering with Veteran Service Organizations, government agencies, and the business community to hold hiring fairs across the United States.

On November 10th, we began a new tradition of recognizing specific businesses that have gone above and beyond to honor the sacrifices our military families make in their service to our nation. ★



The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington Post

Assuring military veterans that “America has your back,” First Lady Michelle Obama announced commitments from companies Thursday to hire 100,000 veterans and military spouses by 2014. “That’s 100,000 veterans and spouses who will have the security of a paycheck and good career,” Mrs. Obama said in a speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “That’s thousands of families that can rest just a little bit easier every night.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FINALISTS OF THE 1ST ANNUAL LEE ANDERSON HIRING OUR HEROES AWARDS

Veteran and Military Spouse Employment Award Finalists:

PepsiCo, Inc.
Triwest Healthcare Alliance
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
VSE Corporation
BNSF Railway Company

Small Business Veteran and Military Spouse Employment Award Finalists:

RecruitMilitary, LLC
Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.
SKYDEX Technologies, Inc.
VetJobs.com, Inc.
ExecuTech Strategic Consulting

Wounded Warrior Employment Transition Assistance Award Finalists:

BAE Systems, Inc.
Rockwell Collins, Inc.
Northrop Grumman Corporation
APi Group, Inc.
Raytheon Company

Women Veteran and Military Spouse Employment Award Finalists:

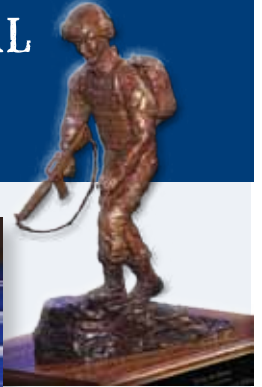
USAA
The Home Depot
Verizon Communications, Inc.
CVS Caremark Corporation
Bank of America Corporation

Post-9/11 Veteran Employment and Internship Award Finalists:

Dollar General Corporation
Chesapeake Energy Corporation
Prudential Financial, Inc.
Siemens Corporation
Union Pacific Corporation



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE 1ST ANNUAL LEE ANDERSON HIRING OUR HEROES AWARDS



Wounded Warrior Transition Assistance Award

APi Group, Inc.

Presented by Nate Smith, Executive Director, Hire Heroes USA



Small Business Veteran and Military Spouse Employment Award

RecruitMilitary, LLC

Presented by Stephen Caldeira, President and Chief Executive, International Franchise Association



Post-9/11 Veteran Employment and Internship Award

Union Pacific Corporation

Presented by Colonel Gregory Gadson, Director, U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program



Women Veteran and Military Spouse Employment and Mentoring Award

CVS Caremark Corporation

Presented by Vivian Bendewald, Woman Veteran and Military Spouse



Lee Anderson Award

PepsiCo, Inc.

Presented by Lee Anderson, Chairman, APi Group, Inc.



HIRING OUR HEROES HAWAII

“ Michelle Obama is fast becoming the first lady of America’s military veterans. ”

U.S. News and World Report

Michelle Obama Helps Veterans Land Jobs (US News).

US News and World Report (11/15, Bedard) reports in its “Washington Whispers” blog that “Michelle Obama is fast becoming the first lady of America’s military veterans. The latest example: today in Hawaii she will co-host a jobs fair for out-of-work veterans with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Symbolism aside, her endorsement of the 68th Chamber jobs fair is expected to give a boost to job-seeking veterans and mainstream American companies who are participating in the Chamber’s “Hiring our Heroes” program, which has already put 3,600 vets back to work. ... Kevin Schmiegel, the Chamber’s vice president of Veterans Initiatives, will introduce Obama today by stating, ‘Let me be clear, this is not charity. This is about connecting talented men and women who have served our nation with job opportunities that exist in the private sector.’ In a preview of his comments, Schmiegel will also address Obama’s personal link to the event when he says, ‘It is my honor to introduce the daughter of an army veteran,



First Lady Michelle Obama, appearing at a “Hiring Our Heroes” job fair in November at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

the wife of the commander-in-chief, and the leader of Joining Forces, our First Lady, Michelle Obama.”

The New York Times

Mrs. Obama Reaches Out To Military Women (NYT).

The New York Times (11/15, Calmes) reports, “Michelle Obama, who traveled here with her husband for an economic summit of Pacific nations, attended a job fair for military veterans and spouses on Monday and commiserated with the women in

the group. ... Mrs. Obama’s attendance at the job fair, held at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, was part of a nationwide campaign that she and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., have undertaken with the Hawaiian and United States Chambers of Commerce to help veterans and military spouses find work. She said the chambers have ‘connected more than 44,000 veterans to more than 2,200 employers in 36 states’ and that businesses have committed to hire 125,000 veterans.”



FIRST LADY SAYS TO VETERANS: ‘AMERICA HAS YOUR BACK’

By Susan Essoyan
The Honolulu Star Advertiser

First Lady Michelle Obama, appearing at a “Hiring Our Heroes” job fair at Hickam Air Force Base today, pumped up the crowd by assuring veterans that “America has your back” as they leave the service.

“For a lot of folks, making the transition to civilian life is hard, especially in the midst of a tough economy,” she said. “I know it can be daunting and incredibly stressful to walk away from an institution where you have invested so much of yourselves.

“Here is something else that I know. All of you are some of the highest skilled, hardest working, most dedicated employees that we have in this country. And that’s important for this country to know.”

Her appearance coincided with the “Hiring Our Heroes” job fair sponsored by the U.S. and Hawaii chambers of commerce, one of 100 being held across the country this year to help veterans and military family members land jobs. The First Lady returned to Washington, D.C. sometime this afternoon after her appearance.

The crowd, some in uniform, and some



Hiring Fair at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickham, Hawaii.

bringing their children along, waited patiently for the First Lady’s arrival on the lawn outside the Hickam Officers’ Club, standing in the sun for nearly an hour, listening to an Air Force band play pop tunes. They erupted in cheers at the sight of her.

“I’m happy to see her here doing good things,” said Denise Wahinekapu, an Air Force retiree.

There were 53 employers at the job fair, ranging from E Noa Tours to Bank of Hawaii to GameStop, and more than 500 people came to check it out. So far, 68 “Hiring Our Heroes” fairs have been held across the country and 3,600 people have found jobs, according to Kevin Schmiegel, vice president of veterans employment programs for the U.S. Chamber.

“What you see is not just success at the hiring fairs in terms of placements but the creation of a movement across the country,” Schmiegel said. “When the tables are folded up and the chairs are put away ... all these employers become engaged on this issue of hiring veterans and military spouses, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because it’s right for business.” ★

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VETERANS EMPLOYMENT IN THE HEADLINES

Associated Press

More than a dozen veterans who've been hired through Chamber of Commerce hiring fairs for veterans were on hand. They included 33-year-old Dwayne Simmons, who said he had an "interview-to-hire moment" at a hiring fair two weeks ago and is bound for the Sam's Club manager training program in Tulsa, Okla.

Naperville Sun

More than 600 job seekers vying for positions with 86 different employers came to the 40th of what will ultimately be 100 job fairs sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

WCVB Boston

With about a million veterans unemployed, the White House says [Hiring Our Heroes] is the largest coordinated effort by the private sector to hire them in years. Marine Corporal Megan Morse has struggled to find employment with the injuries she sustained in Iraq. Thanks to the Hiring Our Heroes program at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, she is now on the verge of a job offer after attending one their recruitment fairs.

NWAonline

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has a nationwide public-private partnership to help veterans and their spouses find jobs in their local communities.

Burlington County Times

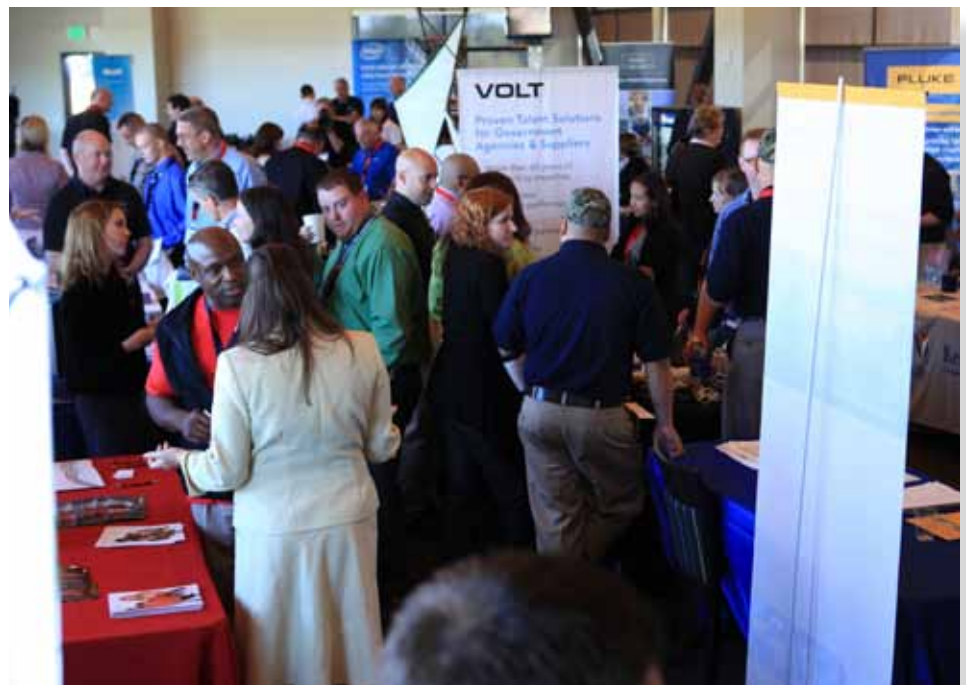
"Attendee Bob Looby, immediate past commander of the American Legion for New Jersey, called [the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes] job fair a 'phenomenal' opportunity for veterans."

CNN

"K.C. Baney showed up at one of [the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's] job fairs in New Jersey a few weeks ago. The 36-year-old from Island Heights, New Jersey, spent 10 years in the U.S. Army and served in some of the most dangerous places in the world. Baney wound up being hired by Hecht Trailers in Toms River, New Jersey.



Hiring Fair in Phoenix, Arizona. To date more than 5,400 veterans and 83 spouses have found employment at our 83 hiring events.



Hiring Fair in Tacoma, Washington



TOUR AIMS TO REDUCE JOBLESS RATE AMONG VETERANS

By Jennifer Robison, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Unemployment as a threat to national security?

You'd better believe it.

The nationwide jobless rate among veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq is 12 percent, well above 8.6 percent in the general population. For reservists, unemployment jumps to 14 percent. Military spouses have it worse still, with a 26 percent jobless rate.

“(Military) recruiters tell young men and women every day that they’ll be better off in four years if they serve our country. The fact is, that’s not true,” said Kevin Schmiegel, vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s veterans employment program. “How are we going to recruit talented young men and women if they see those unemployment data? Why should they raise their right hand and serve in an all-volunteer force if their service isn’t going to be valued or understood when they’re looking for employment after they leave? This is a national security issue.”

“Plus, most veterans leaving service don’t have a college degree, and language that describes their experience may not translate into corporate-speak.”

On Friday, Schmiegel and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki came to Las Vegas to address that issue, as the U.S. Chamber partnered with Student Veterans of America and RecruitMilitary to host the Hiring Our Heroes-Las Vegas job fair. About 60 national and local companies, including The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Walmart, Prudential and Progressive Insurance, participated, along with roughly 500 veterans attending college or technical school in Las Vegas and elsewhere.

Vet hiring is slow for a few reasons.

First is access. The Department of Defense doesn’t give employers access to active-duty military members to discuss post-service employment, Schmiegel said. Nor does the military talk civilian transition before service ends.

Plus, most veterans leaving service don’t have a college degree, and language that describes their experience may not translate into corporate-speak.

So there’s a need to help veterans articulate their skills in terms employers recognize—something they received help with Friday in seminars and from employers—as well as a need to help the private sector realize the “unique technical skills and leadership attributes” veterans offer, Schmiegel said.

It’s not just about polishing résumés.

Vets must also combat perception.

Just ask Jessi Tseng.

Tseng, in town from San Francisco for the fair, served in Iraq as a human resources administrator and on the personal security detachment for a brigade commander. She graduated in 2010 with a sociology degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, landing in the top 10 percent of her class and serving as a director for two nonprofits. After teaching English in China for a year, Tseng returned to a nonexistent job market. She said her military peers have the same problem finding work.

“There are a lot of companies out there that say they are extremely vet-friendly, but I’ve been applying, applying, applying, and I haven’t been able to find a job,” said Tseng, 25. “I think a lot of employers look at veterans and feel there’s baggage, but I believe veterans have more potential to excel. They have the drive, they have the motivation, they are goal-oriented and they are mission-oriented.”