

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Job fair in Lemoore continues Governor's initiative
of matching veterans with employers and jobs**

SACRAMENTO – Employers and veterans came together today in Lemoore for the “Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet (HAH-HAV)” job fair, an initiative sponsored by Governor Brown that offers veterans access to employment opportunities as well as education and resource services aimed at helping them reenter civilian life.

More than 60 employers were on hand at the fair located at Golden Eagle Arena West Hills College, including Cargill Meat, Wawona Frozen Foods, Tower Pest Control, Farmers Insurance, Airstreams Renewables, and The Wine Group. Also participating were 25 schools, training programs, service organizations, and government organizations.

The Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet job fairs are held throughout the state and, since the initiative's inception in 2008, have linked 15,000 veterans with 700 employers and employment resource agencies.

Now in its sixth year, the fairs are open to all veterans, but are particularly helpful to young veterans just home from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country,” said Pam Harris, Director of the California Employment Development Department (EDD). “It's time we repay them for their service by helping them find a job and a future in civilian life, and the Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet job fairs are designed to do just that.”

According to EDD veterans' representatives, veterans bring with them unique work skills and character traits valued by employers. Ninety-five percent of California veterans have high school diplomas and almost half have associate degrees or higher. Many of them have mastered high-tech skills in the military.

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The job fairs, funded again this year by \$250,000 in federal Workforce Investment Act monies and support from the EDD, give public agencies and private companies a chance to support veterans. It also gives them access to a large pool of job-ready candidates. The multi-agency initiative brings together EDD, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Apprenticeship Standards, and California Community Colleges.

"The men and women who have served us honorably and well in our military are coming home and the best way to recognize their selfless service and sacrifice is to help them find meaningful civilian careers," said CDVA Secretary Peter James Gravett.

The U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, while the national unemployment rate among non-veterans is about 9 percent, the national unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans is 12 percent. Among the youngest of the post 9/11 vets – those between the ages of 18 and 24 – nearly one-third are out of work.

California is home to 1.8 million of the nation's 21.2 million veterans, according to 2012 U.S. Census Bureau data. The unemployment rate among younger California veterans age 18 to 34 was 14.4 percent in 2012, compared to 13.4 percent among comparably aged Californians who had not served in the military. (Breakdown of ages 18 – 24 is only available for national figures; state figures break down is ages 18 – 34.) And the unemployment rate among California Gulf War-era II veterans, defined as those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time after September 2001, was 13.5 percent in 2012. This was down 8.2 percentage points from 2011, when the unemployment rate among California Gulf War-era II veterans was 21.7 percent.

EDD staff dedicated to helping veterans is available in local One-Stop Career Centers throughout the state, providing veterans with local ongoing job search services and case management.

For more information about EDD's veterans services, please visit our website at www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/services_for_veterans.htm.

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