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Christie Administration Partners with U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Camden for "Hiring Our Heroes" Veterans Job Fair

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Trenton, NJ - Further demonstrating the Christie Administration's commitment to New Jersey veterans and their families, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno, along with Commissioner Harold J. Wirths of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and Brigadier General Michael L. Cuniff of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMAVA), joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion and other partners in hosting a "Hiring Our Heroes" job fair today at the Susquehanna Bank Center in Camden. The Hiring our Heroes program is designed to assist former military service people gain jobs, receive transition assistance or enter training programs.

"This Administration is strongly committed to our veterans and their families, and we will continue to provide the resources necessary to help those who need assistance in transitioning back to civilian life. That includes finding employment for our veterans returning from military service," said Acting Governor Guadagno, whose son is a member of the military. "Our veterans deserve the very best, and I applaud the employers here today for being ready to offer jobs to the men and women returning home from service."

Hundreds of veterans and military spouses had an opportunity to speak with approximately 80 employers and service organizations participating in the job fair. Employers ranged from some of the nation's largest companies to dozens of the region's smaller businesses.

"We have a great partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American Legion, and we are pleased to join them for another 'Hiring Our Heroes' job fair," said Labor Commissioner Wirths. "These men and women put their lives on the line to serve this nation and they deserve nothing less than having a job to return to when they get home. We're committed to helping them realize their new career goals."

"Veterans' transition and unemployment is not a stranger to our nation's history. Reservists, National Guardsmen and veterans who return from active duty are not immune to employment struggles that face our state and nation," Brigadier General Cuniff said. "The employers here today recognize the value of hiring veterans and this job fair is another step in the right direction to ensure New Jersey veterans are afforded employment opportunities after their honorable and faithful service to our country."

The Christie Administration has partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for the past two years in a series of veteran job fairs held throughout the Garden State. The LWD and DMAVA have joined with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion and other sponsors to support "Hiring Our Heroes" events from Toms River, Flemington and Somerville to Trenton.

In fact, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce declared the Trenton "Hiring Our Heroes" job fair, held last September at the Sun National Bank Center, the largest Hiring Our Heroes job fair it has held in the nation. More than 700 veterans attended and over 120 employers participated in the event.

In April 2012, LWD organized a number of events under Governor Christie's *Operation: Hire a Jersey Hero* initiative, including a symposium held at Prudential's headquarters in Newark that focused on connecting employers with state and federal resources that can help them hire veterans. LWD also organized a veteran-specific job fair last May on board the USS New Jersey (Battleship NJ) in Camden where 350 veterans and military spouses had an opportunity to meet with 50 employers who had a combined 2,800 available positions to fill.

More recently, LWD and DMAVA participated in job fairs in Essex County in December, Somerset County in February and Mercer County in March, as well as an effort held in Morris County to help homeless veterans from throughout New Jersey.

Today's U.S. Chamber of Commerce "Hiring Our Heroes" job fair also was co-sponsored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment & Training Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, NBC News, and other local partners.

In addition to *Operation: Hire a Jersey Hero* initiatives, the Christie Administration provided a \$190,000 grant to the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council's Helmets to Hardhats program last summer to help military personnel, National Guard, reserve, and transitioning active-duty military members to connect to quality career and

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training opportunities in the building and construction trades. It was the second consecutive grant the Administration awarded to the program. In 2011, a \$195,000 was awarded to the organization.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber Foundation launched "Hiring Our Heroes" in March 2011 as a sustained grassroots campaign to help veterans and military spouses find meaningful employment in hundreds of communities across America. To date, the campaign has resulted in more than 430 hiring fairs being hosted in 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, with more than 18,400 people placed into jobs.

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