

VFW Announces 2008 National Employment Award Winners

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. has selected its 2008 National Employment Award winners. The annual awards program recognizes individuals and organizations for their efforts to promote veterans employment, training and advancement opportunities within their communities. The five category winners are:

James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award

Winner: Keith O. Brandon, a veteran employment representative in Orange Park, Fla., who serves a six-county area in northeast Florida that includes Naval Air Stations Jacksonville and Mayport. Mr. Brandon monitors the vocational rehabilitation training of more than 50 veterans who are learning to overcome significant disabilities, advises more than 200 new veterans and transitioning servicemembers who were wounded or injured in the current war on terrorism, and oversees the training and conduct of 48 Transition Assistance Program classes at the naval installations. He developed civic partnerships to shelter, clothe, counsel and transport homeless veterans, and he helps formerly incarcerated veterans to secure meaningful employment. Mr. Brandon was nominated for the award by the VFW Department of Florida.

National Employment Service Office Award

Winner: Workforce Solutions of East Texas (Tyler) for its veterans' first commitment. Workforce Solutions is heavily involved with 10 civic organizations and a half dozen veterans' service organizations to pair job seeking veterans with employers seeking responsible employees. The Annual Vet-Focused Job Fair brings in up to 700 veterans and 70 companies, and those veterans placed had a retention rates exceeding 85 percent. The Annual Job-a-Thon, which aired for more than 10 hours on a local television station, yielded more than 5,300 calls for 2,000 job openings. Workforce Solutions of East Texas (Tyler) was nominated by the VFW Department of Texas.

Employer of the Year Award – Small Business (under 250 employees)

Winner: Prologistix, of Sanford, N.C. Prologistix is a logistics staffing firm that specializes in

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filling vacancies ranging from entry-level warehouse workers to senior executives. Twenty-six percent of its 122 employees are veterans who receive preference in recruiting and placement within the company. Prologistix has established an excellent working relationship with the Sanford Employment Security Commission to train and place veterans, because the company recognizes that a veteran's skills, experience and work ethic adds value to the overall growth and stability of the logistics industry. Prologistix was nominated by the VFW Department of North Carolina.

Employer of the Year Award – Large Business Private Sector (more than 250 employees)

Winner: CSX Transportation, of Jacksonville, Fla. CSX is among the nation's leading transportation companies. One-fifth of its 34,000 employees are veterans who receive preference in recruiting and placement within the company. CSX has been recognized by the Defense Department for its military-friendly benefit policies that include citizen-soldier recognition at company functions, an ombudsman assigned to each military family, differential pay during call-ups, and total family health coverage during activated periods. The company donated \$100,000 to the Wounded Warrior Project to stand up its "Warriors to Work" program, plus CSX actively recruits veterans through career fairs, one-stop centers, and military family readiness centers. CSX Transportation was nominated by the VFW Department of Florida.

Employer of the Year Award – Large Business Federal Contractor (more than 250 employees)

Winner: Wackenhut Services Incorporated-Savannah River Site, of Aiken, S.C. Wackenhut's strategic vision is to be recognized as the leader among security contractors for the Department of Energy. One of the company's many goals is to support military veterans through aggressive recruiting programs, and to provide veteran employment and benefits beyond that which is required by law. This site employs 900 people, 61 percent of whom are veterans. Last year, they hired 72 new employees, 96 percent of whom were veterans, who receive preference in recruiting, placement and promotion. Wackenhut Services Incorporated-Savannah River Site was nominated by the VFW Department of South Carolina.

"Providing meaningful employment to transitioning military personnel is one of the top ways to prove you support the troops," said VFW National Commander George Lisicki, a Vietnam veteran from Carteret, N.J. "I congratulate everyone for their continued support for military families everywhere."

The above awards will be presented at their respective VFW department conventions next month. For more information, e-mail:

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