

Huntsville/Redstone designated as an Army pilot site

Also named Community of Excellence

On June 14th, Brigadier General Jeff Horne, the Army's Director of Human Resources Policy, visited Huntsville to officially designate Huntsville/Redstone Arsenal as a regional pilot site for the Army's new Veterans Employment Transition Initiative. He also announced that our community has been recognized as a Community of Excellence.

At the kick off of Armed Forces Week, before community and military leaders, BG Horne praised Huntsville/Redstone Arsenal for their great support of the military, wounded warriors, Veterans, and Retirees. On June 15th, with a group of key Team Redstone human resources, personnel, and hiring officials, the general introduced the Army's Veterans Employment and Transition Initiative (VETI), and encouraged the managers to optimize hiring of Veterans at Redstone Arsenal.

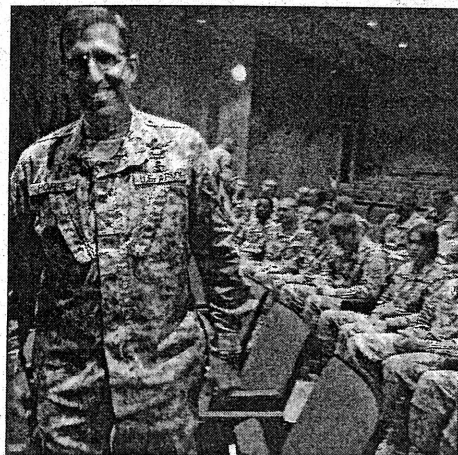
The Army's vision for VETI is to optimize opportunities for service members to continue as contributing members of society, fulfilling their Warrior Ethos of service to country, and to solidify the partnership between the Federal Government, private industry, non-profit organizations, academia, and community agencies. This team will partner to develop policy and procedures to ensure the support of leaders and stakeholders. We are to develop programs for recruitment, employment, and retention of Veterans within the federal family. As a pilot site for the Army, Huntsville/Redstone/SSV will develop best practices for Veteran transition and employment, identify sys-

temic barriers to hiring Veterans, and record lessons while developing a program to maximize hiring of Veterans.

The selection of Huntsville/Redstone began last October, when Will Webb, President of Still Serving Veterans, briefed BG Horne on what Still Serving Veterans and the Huntsville/Redstone Arsenal community were doing to help wounded warriors and Veterans.

Two weeks later, a Presidential Executive Order mandated increased employment of Veterans in the Federal government, in order to transform the Federal government into a model employer of Veterans. Faced with the mandate of the Executive Order, BG Horne thought of Team Redstone and Still Serving Veterans. He visited Huntsville in January to brief local community, military, and corporate leaders on VETI, the Army's response to the Executive Order. During the Huntsville Chamber's recent Washington, D.C. trip, BG Horne met with Mayors Battle and Finley, and Will Webb to solidify the region's selection as a pilot site for VETI. This is a great opportunity for Huntsville/RSA/SSV to get the Army's focus on optimizing hiring Veterans for government jobs on Redstone Arsenal.

This critical program is not only the right thing to do, it makes good business sense. Yes, we must do more to honor Veterans who have sacrificed to serve our nation, and meaningful employment opportunities are critical to their well-deserved quality of life. But also, we must retain their skills, drive, motivation, and dedication in the Federal workforce...a workforce with 45 major shortage specialties, and a senior and rapidly retiring civilian population. We must study Army transition programs and make recommendations



Brigadier General Jeff Horne, the Army's Director of Human Resources Policy, visits with Soldiers at Redstone Arsenal to discuss the Veterans Employment Transition Initiative.

for improved services and opportunities for service members. Success will be measured by the number of Veterans hired into the Federal government, and the number of Veterans with targeted disabilities hired into the Department of the Army.