



Supporting the Troops

Miss Oregon 2011 Caroline McGowan offered her support and took pictures when Oregon Army National Guard troops participated in a mobilization ceremony last October in Milton-Freewater. The service members, part of the 1186 Military Police Company detachment, are scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Jobs a Hurdle for Returning Soldiers

State makes employment resources available

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

For many soldiers who are returning from active duty overseas,

Oregon's high unemployment rate and lack of available jobs creates an array of challenges.

According to Gary Dominick,

veterans' coordinator for the Oregon Employment Department, many service members who return from Iraq and Afghanistan have

been out of the civilian job market for more than a year, which makes readjustment to the job market troublesome.

"We have a difficult employment situation to begin with," he said.

"The unemployment rate in Oregon is higher than the national unemployment rate."

He said, however, the state is going to do everything in its power to ensure returning soldiers have the resources they need to help them find employment.

When members of Third Battalion of the 116th Cavalry recently returned to Oregon from deployment in Iraq. "As part of their debriefing, veteran representatives were there along with National Guard yellow ribbon staff, to help integrate soldiers back into the community, including employment," Dominick said.

Each veteran was registered into their data system with the employment department and then referred to job announcements and other employment opportunities. "That was at the initial point of their return," said Dominick. "Then they go home, and at that point, we follow up with them to find out what else it is that they need."

He explained the individuals are later encouraged to visit a Work Source office and meet with a veteran representative who will work with them on their resumes, interviewing skills and how to do company search. "Then we get more specific on how to match a soldier with a particular job," he said. "And they really bring strength to their abilities because of what they have learned in the military."

Still, Dominick said with Oregon's high unemployment rate returning soldiers just getting home, and also for those Veterans who have been employed, times are not so easy. "Their jobs have been cut or they have been laid off," he said. "You also have some veterans, who have been working for a long time getting laid off, or perhaps the job they were doing and the skills they have to do

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