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Job Search Assistance Available to Veterans

MONTGOMERY -- With Veterans Day approaching next week, joblessness is a plight many of our nation's heroes face when returning home from serving overseas. As of September, the national unemployment rate among veterans was 6.7%, with 735,000 vets across the country unable to find work.

"'Unemployed' and 'veteran' are two words that should never go together," said Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees.

"These valiant men and women voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to protect the rights we enjoy every day. We should do everything in our power to make sure that when service members return from a tour of duty, they come home with every opportunity to enjoy the freedoms they fought to protect," Surtees continued.

To help combat this issue, the Alabama Career Center System has a bevy of resources, including personnel and online tools, to assist service members in not only finding work but also training for new careers.

One such opportunity is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), which offers 12 months of training assistance to veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 who are unemployed at the date of application and were not dishonorably discharged from service. Participants must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate, and train the veteran for a high demand occupation.

For those veterans seeking more immediate job opportunities, there are specially-trained staff members at Career Centers throughout the state who are well-versed in finding jobs for vets and helping them adjust to civilian life.

According to Surtees, veterans are ideal candidates for employers looking to fill positions because of their extensive training and numerous intangibles.

“Those who served in the military know the importance of being on time and paying attention to detail,” he said. “You know they’re going to do everything to the best of their ability regardless of what kind of uniform they might be wearing.”

For more information about the numerous employment resources available to veterans, visit your local Career Center or www.joblink.alabama.gov.

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Members of the media needing more information should contact Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.