

Returning Veterans Fight New Battle Stateside: Unemployment *Mobile Job Training Program Brings Training and Employment to those who have Served*

POMPANO BEACH, Fla. – As America honors past and present veterans this Thursday, the fact remains that we still have a large number of returning service members that will be fighting another battle, unemployment.

While the national unemployment rate, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is 9.6%, the unemployment rate for returning veterans between the ages of 18-24 is at 21.1%. This high percentage of unemployment is due partly to stereotyping veterans' fitness for employment, such as inadequate technology skills and lack of education.

Fortunately, there is one company – BRS Aerospace, a manufacturer of parachute systems for aviation and military applications – that is focusing its attention on getting a group of veterans back to work now. The South St. Paul, Minn. company recently opened a new 125,000 square foot facility in Pompano Beach, Fla. Currently they have hired 100 employees and have plans to hire 400 additional workers.

Commencing on Veterans Day, 15 returning veterans will begin their training and by Thanksgiving they will be gainfully employed.

“While we are focused on hiring the best talent to produce these specialized heavy cargo parachutes, we feel honored that we can put a group of veterans to work by Thanksgiving. It is the least we can do for them,” said Larry Williams, BRS Aerospace Chief Executive Officer.

BRS Aerospace is being assisted in the hiring and Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.[®]) program training effort by the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP). The Florida MEP has streamlined the hiring and training process, in addition to identifying skilled veterans. The veterans from Florida will receive the benefits of the M.O.S.T.[®] program when the mobile training program brings its state-of-the-art M.O.S.T.[®] unit to Pompano Beach. Florida, MEP will set-up shop in the parking lot of the new BRS Aerospace facility and provide the latest manufacturing training to the veterans, many who are minorities. Following the completion of the training, the returning service members will receive permanent employment with BRS Aerospace.

The M.O.S.T.[®] program is a fast-track, intensive skills training, recruitment, assessment and placement program that prepares unemployed and underemployed individuals, including returning veterans and minorities for entry level production jobs in a fraction of the time of traditional programs. The unique M.O.S.T.[®] program identifies jobs prior to training, trains hard-to-serve populations for high wage jobs with benefits, fills the existing skills gap, and has a job retention rate of 87%. This program has been successfully implemented in Mississippi, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island and in Florida.

“With the opening of our new facility, we are excited to bring additional jobs to Broward County, and proud to be working with the Florida MEP to provide employment to those who have bravely served our country,” said Williams. “We look forward to working with the Florida

MEP to bring additional veterans into our company and decrease the unemployment rate for veterans in our state.”

Joseph Duggan, a veteran who has fought for our freedom and is fighting to find work said that he had been "going out and putting applications at numerous places and just going from place to place," but was unsuccessful in finding employment. Having successfully completed a recent M.O.S.T.[®] training, Joe was hired by Haynes Corporation, in Naples, Florida.

“The M.O.S.T.[®] program is one example that is available in many states that provides quick-start job training for small and mid-sized manufacturers in need of entry-level workers,” said Dr. Claudia Follet, Director of Grants and Partnership Development. “We outfit the M.O.S.T.[®] traveling unit with cutting-edge equipment and offer participants an opportunity to upgrade or learn new manufacturing skills.”

With the unique advantage of mobility, the M.O.S.T.[®] program is able to take its services to the parts of the state where jobs and potential employees are located. The unit can be situated right at the doorstep of an employer’s facility or at a location convenient for trainees. Additionally, the M.O.S.T.[®] program can be customized to suit the needs of participating employers, which helps reduce the time it typically takes for a trainee to become a productive employee.

“In this time of economic uncertainty where jobs are scarce, Florida MEP is proud of the M.O.S.T.[®] program’s ability to help veterans secure employment through skills enhancement. We are excited to work with BRS Aerospace and other companies to positively affect the livelihoods of these veterans,” said Dick Peck, Chair of the Florida MEP. “With additional funding, we are confident that we could put 5,000 more veterans in existing jobs.”