



# Leadership Council and Area Chambers Join Forces to Launch Scott Patriot Program

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The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and regional area chambers of commerce are excited to announce a new initiative being kicked off today, Sept. 11, 2013 – the **Scott Patriot Program**. The program is aimed at ensuring that those local communities and businesses that are providing support to members of the military affiliated with Scott Air Force Base (AFB), and their families, are recognized as military-friendly, while also growing the level of support from others in the metro area.

The region's recent win of the coveted Abilene Trophy is a testament to the world-class support already provided for the men, women and children associated with Scott Air Force Base, but the desire of the Leadership Council and others to build on that led to the creation of the innovative **Scott Patriot Program**.

“The idea grew out of discussions on how we could do even more for our military, and *Operation All In* was conceived by our working group as an opportunity to get commitments from every business in the communities contiguous to Scott AFB to show support in some way in order to earn recognition as a **Scott Patriot**,” notes Gerry Schuetzenhofer, chairman of the Leadership Council's Military Affairs Committee. “It's simply the right thing to do for those who forego comfort, face hardship, confront danger and sometimes die in defense of our nation, and for the family members who remain behind while they serve.”

To help ensure the success of the operation, the **Scott Patriot Program** is being launched with the full support of the chambers of commerce in the communities close to Scott AFB, including the Greater Belleville Area Chamber, Mascoutah Chamber, Lebanon Chamber, O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber, Metro East Chamber serving the Swansea-Fairview Heights area, Collinsville Chamber, Southwestern Madison County Chamber and the Troy/Maryville/St. Jacob/Marine Chamber, as well as the St. Louis

Regional Chamber. Other chambers and communities across the region also are being invited to be a part of this new initiative and to spread the word to businesses they work with.

“Both Madison County and St. Clair County have already committed to being the first counties in the region to participate, and Chairman Dunstan and we will issue proclamations in the coming weeks to affirm our counties are Scott Patriot Counties,” noted St. Clair County Board Chairman Mark Kern.

Signing up for the **Scott Patriot Program is easy**, and businesses and communities across the St. Louis Region are encouraged to do so. They simply need to visit the newly launched website at [www.scottpatriot.com](http://www.scottpatriot.com) and complete the short survey to check off what they are doing to support our military families. Once the completed survey is received, those signing up will be sent a welcome packet including a **Scott Patriot** decal to post in the window of their business, city offices or community center so they can easily be recognized as “military-friendly.” Participants also will get a customizable certificate they can display to communicate to customers the specific ways that they support SAFB. Finally, they will be listed on the new website and their business/organization or community name will be linked directly back to their own website where they can provide additional details about the support they provide for Scott AFB. Even if a business hasn’t been doing something specific to support Scott AFB but would like to, they can visit the website to see a list of 10 easy ways that they can begin showing their support, pick one or more that works for them, then come back to the website to complete the survey once they’ve put their plans in place.

While the window decals will enable those visiting participating businesses and communities to recognize **Scott Patriot** participants, the website is intended to provide an easy way for anyone who would like to make a point of doing business with military-friendly businesses to identify those in our region who have been qualified as a Scott Patriot so they can patronize them.

A representative from Scott Air Force Base also serves on the steering committee to help facilitate sharing the information through the right channels at the base so they can make sure military personnel and retirees are familiar with the many businesses that take active steps to support them and their families. While the primary goal of the program is to ramp up that support, it is expected that designation as a Scott Patriot will provide participants with additional business from the military, retirees, civilian workers, and members of the general public that support those who serve Scott AFB, resulting in a win-win for all.

As the Department of Defense (DOD) continues to look for ways to cut costs and the potential of another round of Base Realignment and Closure looms on the horizon, the

Scott Patriot Program also will serve to demonstrate the continued and growing community support for Scott AFB. That is one important factor the DOD considers when looking at which bases to add to, take from or close, underscoring the important role an initiative like this can play in protecting and to continue the growth at Scott AFB, a \$3 billion economic engine in our region.

“Clearly, there are compelling reasons to implement a program of this nature, but it wouldn’t be possible without the help of the steering committee, the student volunteers being provided by McKendree University and the support of the chambers who have committed up front to engage their businesses in this program,” adds Schuetzenhofer. “We’re looking forward to widespread participation and to reaffirming our unmatched support for our military families.”

More details about the program are available on the website at [www.scottpatriot.com](http://www.scottpatriot.com).