



SCOTT PATRIOT PROGRAM GROWS TO MORE THAN 650 PARTICIPANTS DURING YEAR 1

September 12 2014 10:29 AM

EDWARDSVILLE, ILL., Sept. 11, 2014 .The Scott Patriot Program turns one year old today, and to date, more than 650 businesses and organizations have signed up to be part of this unique initiative that recognizes local businesses, communities and organizations as being "military-friendly" thanks to discounts offered and other means of support demonstrated for military families affiliated with Scott Air Force Base (SAFB). While a primary goal of the program is to make it easy for military families to identify those who are military friendly in our region by listing them all at www.scottpatriot.com, it also aims to encourage others to provide the support that is so important to those who forego comfort, confront danger and sometimes die in defense of our nation, and to the family members who remain behind while they serve.

"We're thrilled to have such great participation just one year into the program, but we know that there are many more businesses and organizations across our region that are doing their part to support our military families, and we really want to get them signed up too," noted Gerry Schuetzenhofer, chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois. The Leadership Council and several Metro East chamber of commerce organizations launched the program on Sept. 11, 2013, and have spent the first year building the program's membership, enhancing the website and working with their colleagues at Scott Air Force Base to help educate military members and their families about the program and why they should patronize Scott Patriots.

Among the special offers available from Scott Patriots are free soda fountain drinks and coffee for uniformed personnel at Coffee Cartel and Abner Gas Mart; 25% off storage units at A Storage Inn; 15% off purchases at Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate Company; 10% off at a variety of local restaurants, including Burger King, Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken, Jersey Mike's Subs and Bella Milano; 10% or more off at a range of retailers, from the Alpine Shop and Eckert's to Frieze Harley Davidson;

discounts in various amounts for haircuts at Sport Clips, Great Clips and All Styles Barber and Beauty Salon, and countless other discounts and specials on products, services, activities, educational courses and more available throughout the bi-state region. Dozens of the Patriots also hire veterans to fill open positions, and, still, others support one or more of the many organizations that are working to support, enhance or grow Scott Air Force Base.

Many of the Scott Patriots provide support in a variety of ways, collectively representing thousands of examples of local support, and, while only some Patriots estimate the value of their support, the combined value reported by those signing up far exceeds \$1.5 million.

"The support of the surrounding communities has been integral to the growth and success of Scott Air Force Base since its establishment in 1917," notes Col. Kyle Kremer, Scott AFB installation commander and commander, 375th Air Mobility Wing. "Scott, in fact, would not exist if it wasn't for the efforts and advocacy to the War Department by community leaders to build a military aviation training site here.

Fast forward 97 years and Col. Kremer notes that Scott Air Force Base continues to enjoy great relationships with its civilian neighbors, citing the recent ranking by Air Force Times that named Scott as tied with Wright-Patterson AFB as the best base to be stationed in the United States.

"What makes Scott stand out is the quality of life,, not only on base, but in the communities of the greater St. Louis metro area," states Col. Kremer. "The support our service members receive from the local area is tremendous. The Scott Patriot Program is one example of how much the communities and their businesses appreciate our military service and its inherent sacrifices. As the Air Force celebrates its 67th birthday two weeks from now on Sept. 18, Scott AFB takes great pride in being the third oldest active Air Force base and "the best" Air Force assignment. We salute and thank the surrounding communities for their steadfast support, for without them neither of these accomplishments would be possible."

Other businesses or organizations that offer discounts or support for the military and their families are encouraged to sign up so that local military families will be aware of their offerings. They can complete a brief online application at <http://scottpatriot.com/scott-patriot-program/>. Those interested in stepping up their support for the military will find a list of 10 easy ways to begin showing support and can pick one or more that works for them in order to sign up. The process is free and easy and takes just two minutes, whether done online or by phone by calling the Leadership Council at 618-692-9745.

New Patriots will be sent a welcome packet, including a Scott Patriot decal to post in the window of the business, office or community center, so it is easily recognized as being "military-friendly." Many choose to also display the Scott Patriot logo or affiliation on their marquee or other outdoor signage, further highlighting their involvement and creating greater visibility for the program. Each Patriot is listed on the website with a direct link back to their own website, where additional details about the specific support provided can be promoted. The website also features an events section with listings and flyers about events that would be of specific interest to members of the military and their families. A Communities page provides insight into all the Scott Patriot communities in the Metro East that have signed on, including both Madison and St. Clair counties. On the social media side, a Twitter page, @ScottPatriot, was launched during the first year of the program and is further engaging the community in this innovative effort.

Joining the Leadership Council in administering the program is McKendree University, while other partners include the Collinsville Chamber, Edwardsville-Glen Carbon Chamber, Greater Belleville Area Chamber, Mascoutah Chamber, Metro East Regional Chamber, O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber, Southwestern Madison County Chamber, St. Louis Regional Chamber, RiverBend Growth Association and the Troy-Maryville Chamber. More details about the program and a complete list of Patriots can be found at www.scottpatriot.com.

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is a member-based, economic development corporation representing Madison and St. Clair counties. The Council works to unite business, industry, government, education and labor for economic growth in Southwestern Illinois. These effective partnerships serve as a driving force behind successful economic development efforts throughout the Metro East region.