



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, BELLE-SCOTT COMMITTEE AND SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE TEAM UP FOR NETWORKING EVENT FOR SEPARATING MILITARY MEMBERS

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Edwardsville, Ill., Sept. 26, 2014 . . . Thursday night, more than 70 military members transitioning from postings at Scott Air Force Base participated in a unique networking event co-sponsored by the Belle-Scott Committee and the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois to match these highly trained individuals with local job openings. 'Networking Night at Scott Air Force Base' featured representatives from more than 50 businesses hoping to fill positions with qualified veteran candidates. The informal job networking session, which the airmen attended with their spouses, took place at the Scott Club at Scott Air Force Base.

The Leadership Council, St. Clair County and Madison County have been spearheading the Scott Air Force Base Task Force efforts to determine the best ways to protect, enhance and grow the base as the Department of Defense continues to look for ways to cut costs. Among those cost cutting measures are plans by the Air Force to reduce 292 jobs at Scott Air Force Base as part of a sweeping management review to reduce nearly 3,500 nationwide jobs and save \$1.6 billion over the next five years. In the wake of the Air Force's July announcement about those cuts, the Scott Air Force Base Task Force has been working with the Airmen & Family Readiness Center at Scott Air Force Base with the goal of facilitating employment in Southwestern Illinois for as many separating military members as possible.

"We want to do everything we can to help those affected by the recently announced cuts through networking and job fairs, and this first-of-its-kind event seemed like a fun and efficient way to help them make some great connections," said Ellen Krohne, executive

director of the Leadership Council.

John Lengerman, representing the Belle Scott Committee and emcee for the networking event, added, "It's the right thing to do for the military personnel who have served our country so well, and it's good for our region to keep these talented individuals here in Southwestern Illinois."

Scott Raether, Community Readiness Specialist for the Airman & Family Readiness Center, commented on the importance of events such as this for members of the military.

"Service members are proven professionals. They are highly educated, well trained, disciplined, and motivated. As they gave their lives in service of this nation and sacrificed to protect America's freedoms, it is critically important our military members are supported as they transition to civilian life upon separation or retirement," said Raether. "We offer them transition assistance and employment services in house like courses on interview skills and resume writing. However, the opportunity to meet face-to-face with business representatives, who are willing and eager to hire them and to take advantage of their unique skill sets and experiences, at job fairs and networking events like this, helps to ensure our military members can find continued professional success in the civilian world."

Businesses from industries such as Healthcare, Financial Services, Industry, Technology and Education were all present at the networking event. Among the businesses represented were Southwestern Illinois' significant employers, including Phillips 66, Jet Aviation, McKendree University, Challenge Unlimited and Scott Credit Union, and major St. Louis-based corporations, such as Ameren, Edward Jones, Graybar, Enterprise and BJC Healthcare. Many of the participating employers are members of the Scott Patriot Program, launched last year by the Leadership Council and area chambers of commerce to recognize local businesses, communities and organizations as being "military-friendly" thanks to discounts offered, military-friendly hiring practices and other means of support demonstrated for military families affiliated with Scott AFB. For more information, contact the Leadership Council at 618-692-9745.

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is a member-based, economic development corporation representing Madison and St. Clair counties. The Council works to attract/retain jobs and stimulate capital investment through its coalition of leaders in business, industry, labor, education and government. These effective partnerships serve as a driving force behind successful economic development efforts throughout the Metro East region.