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# Gov. Nixon presents Flag of Freedom Award

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## Gov. Nixon presents Flag of Freedom Award

TROY, Mo. – A business in Troy that has hired 11 military veterans since 2010 under the Show-Me Heroes program today received the Flag of Freedom award from Gov. Jay Nixon. The Governor presented the designation to Witte Brothers Exchange Inc. at a ceremony at the business.

“Witte Brothers Exchange is honoring the sacrifices made by the men and women of our armed services by making it a priority to hire these veterans when they return home,” Gov. Nixon said. “I appreciate efforts by companies like this to hire our veterans, and I encourage more Missouri employers to join the ranks of those who have hired a veteran through the Show-Me Heroes program.”

The Show-Me Heroes program, established by Gov. Nixon in January 2010, is designed to connect military veterans with job opportunities when they return home from service. Administered by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, Show-Me Heroes showcases Missouri businesses that are willing and eager to hire veterans. Employers participating in the Show-Me Heroes program sign a pledge to ramp up efforts to reach out to, recruit and interview veterans for job openings at their business.

So far, 2,277 Missouri businesses have taken the Show-Me Heroes pledge and 1,778 veterans have been hired. Those businesses like Witte Brothers Exchange that have hired veterans receive the Flag of Freedom award, which consists of a plaque featuring an American flag patch from the combat uniform of a member of the Missouri National Guard worn while that Citizen-Soldier or Airman was deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Last month, Gov. Nixon signed HB 1680 to further strengthen the Show-Me Heroes program. HB 1680 adds an on-the-job (OJT) training component for returning National Guard and Reservists and recently-separated active duty service members that Show-Me Heroes employers agree to hire.

Through an OJT program, employers would be reimbursed for 50 percent of Show-Me Heroes participant's wages during a contracted training period. The wage reimbursement will serve as an incentive for Show-Me Heroes employers to hire returning National Guard, Reservists or recently separated active duty personnel who may not have all the skills required for the position.

Employers who wish to participate in Show-Me Heroes can visit the state's Web site, MO.gov, to register and take the pledge. Once a company has done so, it is listed prominently in an online database that highlights veteran-friendly employers across Missouri. The database includes contact information for the businesses and links to their Web sites. Employers receive a special certificate, signed by the Governor, and a decal to display at their location. Beyond the employer directory, the Show-Me Heroes Web site also includes resources for job-seeking veterans, including links to employment openings in state government and a link to Missouri Career Source, a statewide one-stop-shop for Missourians looking for work.

“Missouri's military veterans have served honorably, are well trained, and make excellent employees. That's why my administration remains committed to helping our veterans find jobs when they return home,” Gov. Nixon said. “I ask every employer in Missouri to join us in this effort by visiting MO.gov today to take the Show-Me Heroes pledge so we can support our veterans and grow our economy.”

In addition to Show-Me Heroes, another measure the state has taken under Gov. Nixon to encourage veterans to live, work, and retire here in Missouri came in 2009 when the Governor signed legislation gradually phasing out the state tax on military retirement income. Under the new law, by 2016, military veterans will not pay any state taxes on military pensions.

### *Submitted Story*

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