



News Release

Pat Quinn, Governor

Jay Rowell, Director

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American Legion Chooses IDES' Ottawa Office as Nation's Best Employment Services for Veterans

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Employment Security's Ottawa office will be honored by the American Legion as the nation's best provider of employment services to Veterans.

"It is an amazing honor to be recognized by our military heroes across our country and incredibly rewarding to assist Veterans to return to work and transition back to civilian life," IDES Director Jay Rowell said. "The award recognizes IDES' emphasis on employment services as well as the dedication shown by our associates to help those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom."

IDES is charged with delivering re-employment services to Veterans. In 2012, IDES helped 17,000 Veterans return to work. The Veteran unemployment rate in Illinois was lower than the national rate in 2011 and 2012. The state rate in 2011 was 8.1 percent, the national rate 8.3 percent. The state rate in 2012 was 6.8 percent, the national rate 7.0 percent

The Employment Service award will be presented Aug. 28 during the American Legion's 95th national convention in Houston, Texas. More than 9,000 Veterans are expected to attend. It is the first time Illinois has won a national award from the American Legion. Only one national winner is chosen each year.

"We are excited to see the American Legion's recognition of Illinois' efforts on behalf of Veterans," said Erica Borggren, Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. "Thanks to Governor Quinn's leadership and the work of IDES, our Veterans are receiving much-needed assistance in finding meaningful employment, which is a linchpin to a successful transition to civilian life. We congratulate Ms. Curran and the team of the Ottawa office."

Nancy Curran is the Ottawa office manager. She will accept the award on behalf of all IDES associates during a ceremony at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The American Legion is paying expenses.

Curran said that Illinois has a good story to tell helping Veterans return to work. She said this honor shows there is reason for Veterans, their spouses and their loved ones to be optimistic. Curran also said it is rewarding to work with Veterans and the local partners at Ottawa's One Stop comprehensive center.

With 2.4 million members, the American Legion is the nation's largest organization of wartime Veterans. It began in 1919 with an emphasis on a strong national security, Veteran affairs, Americanism and youth programs. There are more than 14,000 Posts nationwide. The Illinois headquarters is in Bloomington.

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