



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Where Opportunity Knox Celebrates First Anniversary with Nearly 1,500 Veterans Connected to Regional Employment Opportunities in the Greater Louisville Region

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – September 21, 2015 — [Where Opportunity Knox](#), a regional initiative with the goal to connect 10,000 transitioning Veterans and/or military spouses to jobs and the Greater Louisville Region by the end of 2017, announced today that it is celebrating its first anniversary with nearly 1,500 Veterans connected to employment opportunities in the Greater Louisville Region.

Just one year ago, Kentucky Indiana Exchange (KIX), managed by three regional chambers of commerce including Greater Louisville Inc., the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce and One Southern Indiana, launched this unique talent development initiative. While numerous employers throughout the country have made the commitment to hire Veterans, there is no geographic region that has taken on this challenge and we are off to a strong start.

Now twelve months later, 1,445 Veterans and military spouses have been connected with employment opportunities throughout the region through June 2015, and over 130 participating employers have signed up to support this initiative.

“One of the advantages of hiring veterans is the key assets they bring to the table, especially soft skills,” said Shana Seng of Monument Chemical Kentucky in Brandenburg, one of Where Opportunity Knox’s newest employer partners. “We chose to participate in Where Opportunity Knox to gain further awareness of veteran skill sets, better understand how it transfers into our organization and increase our veteran outreach and hiring.”

In addition, over 30 Veteran Network Builders, business professionals who have volunteered to help Veterans build their civilian networks, have been recruited and over 100 human resource professionals have attended Where Opportunity Knox’s quarterly briefings and tours at Fort Knox.

Approximately 100,000 Soldiers transition from active duty service annually through the Army Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) which is headquartered at the U.S. Army Human Resources Command located at Fort Knox, Ky. With more than 3,000 of those transitioning Soldiers stationed at Fort Knox, Greater Louisville's 26-county region has a unique economic development opportunity to tap into this highly skilled Veteran talent like nowhere else in the nation.

According to Beth Avey, Executive Director of Where Opportunity Knox, “While our goal of 10,000 is still in the distance, we are on track to meet our initial goal of 2,500 by the end of 2015. We are confident

that we will hit 10,000 because of our unique competitive advantage that no other region can leverage - our proximity to and partnership with Fort Knox. In addition, we now are working closely with Fort Campbell to continue to expand our reach and tell the Greater Louisville Regional story in terms of quality of place and quality of opportunities.”

Approximately 400 – 500 Soldiers transition from active duty each month from Fort Campbell, which lies on the Kentucky - Tennessee border between the towns of Hopkinsville, Kentucky and Clarksville, Tennessee. According to Avey, “Army-wide 75% of these transitioning Soldiers are ages 22 – 28 and the transitioning population at Fort Campbell mirrors this statistic, making Fort Campbell an ideal location to expand our direct outreach efforts.”

Where Opportunity Knox is not a job placement service but instead is about developing a pipeline of transitioning Veterans who are looking for a post-military place to live and work – a place that values Veterans, offers a high-level quality of life and has a diverse and robust economy with available jobs and careers. Through a network of Regional Veteran Connectors (RVCs) and a host of knowledgeable volunteers, Where Opportunity Knox is making the connections Veterans need to find the right civilian job and the right civilian community. Where Opportunity Knox also provides an online resource for transitioning families to get information about the overall quality of life in the Greater Louisville Region including jobs, schools and more.

“Where Opportunity Knox is the first region I’ve seen adopt an “all-inclusive” approach to recruiting Veteran talent, making them a good model for other regions throughout the country,” added U.S. Army Colonel (Ret) Walter Herd and Director of the Army’s Transition Assistance Program. “They have the total package and recognize that while jobs are important, so are overall quality of life factors such as schools, healthcare, culture, sports and more.” Where Opportunity Knox recently presented to several hundred Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program counselors from around the globe and showcased the Greater Louisville region as a best practice.

Where Opportunity Knox is currently funded by the Duke Energy Foundation, the Gheens Foundation, the James Graham Brown Foundation and the Ogle Foundation. For more information about Where Opportunity Knox and to learn more about hiring opportunities for Veterans, visit www.whereopportunityknox.com.

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