



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

TED STRICKLAND, GOVERNOR

MAJOR GENERAL GREGORY L. WAYT, ADJUTANT GENERAL

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Ohio National Guard recruiting at historic levels

By Capt. Michelle Smith

Ohio National Guard public affairs

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The statistics are astounding, but the story behind the numbers, as Ohio makes recruiting and retention history, is more than just data for the future of the Ohio National Guard.

Both the Ohio Air and Army National Guard exceeded their enlistment goals for the 2008 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30. Both branches attribute their success to changes in the way they do business, as well the unprecedented caliber of applicants waiting to join the ranks.

“We are extremely fortunate with the tremendous quality of Ohio citizens who want to be Soldiers and Airmen,” said Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, the Ohio adjutant general.

The Army National Guard had its second-highest recruiting year ever, ending with 10,926 Soldiers, and the Air National Guard surpassed its goal for the first time in eight years, finishing the year with 112.3 percent of its authorized strength.

Another first occurred when all 10 of the companies in the Army Recruiting and Retention Battalion met their annual mission. “I couldn’t be more proud of an organization than I am today,” said Lt. Col. Chip Tansill, commander of Recruiting and Retention Battalion. “It is unbelievable how extremely committed our recruiting force is to this organization.”

Tansill credits their success to the growth of his recruiters into leaders by running one of the nation’s most successful Recruit Sustainment Programs (RSP). New Soldiers attend this training prior to shipping to Basic Combat Training. “If we bring these kids in and train them hard, they will stay,” he said.

The national shipping goal for each RSP is 75 percent, and last year, Ohio had a ship rate of 92.37 percent, which is the country’s highest ever.

The Air National Guard has its own version of the RSP. According to Chief Master Sgt. Wesley Smith, recruiting and retention superintendent for the Ohio Air National Guard, new Airmen attend drill with their own unit, and are placed into a student flight at the same location they will work upon completing their initial training. “This indoctrinates them into

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the Air National Guard, prepares them for active duty and lets them be part of the team from the start,” he said.

Both branches claim this method makes military service meaningful to new recruits and leads to success in another inventive program called the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program, or G-RAP. This program offers a monetary incentive for referring qualified applicants who join the Ohio National Guard. It has paid more than \$5 million since it’s inception in 2005. “The kids love what they are doing, so they bring their friends,” Tansill said. “Our mission is to produce readiness for the leaders in Ohio, and we are doing that by building strong communities within our ranks.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Mark Wayda, Director of Government and Public Affairs, at (614) 336-7000. Please visit the Ohio National Guard website at <http://ong.ohio.gov>