

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2013

**VA Hosts National Veterans Small Business Conference in St. Louis**

***Help for Veterans Who Own Businesses* *at* *Aug. 6-8 Event***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with other federal agencies and commercial partners, is hosting the National Veterans Small Business Conference from Aug. 6-8 at the America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis.

“VA is committed to bringing more Veteran-owned small businesses into a public-private partnership to help them grow and succeed,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This event is a unique opportunity for Veteran-owned small businesses to connect directly with government procurement decision makers and business partners.”

This is VA’s premier government event designed to help Veteran entrepreneurs compete for -- and win -- new business.

By attending, Veteran-owned business owners will have the one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect directly with representatives from nearly 30 federal agencies. This year’s event also includes 30 commercial companies that are committed to expanding their supply base with Veteran-owned businesses.

Among the businesses participating are Ford Motor, Lockheed Martin, and Pfizer. Government participants include the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Agency for International Development and the State of Missouri.

Participants will receive information, tools, tips, techniques and how-to instructions to start, build and expand a small business into a life-changing reality. Veterans will be able to attend hundreds of training courses.  Networking opportunities include business requirements sessions, networking roundtables, receptions and over 400 exhibits at the two-day expo.

Finally, Veterans will learn about getting the Veteran-owned business certification needed to compete for federal contracts, outreaching to veteran communities, and targeting networking to discuss government procurement and contracting requirements.

Contractor growth rates are down as the U.S. emerges from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. However, contracting for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses is increasing at an annual growth rate of 15 percent.

There are 26 million small businesses in the United States.  Of these, 3.6 million are owned by Veterans and service disabled Veterans. They employ over 1.8 million workers and generate over $1.6 trillion in revenue. VA assists Veteran-owned businesses with everything from small business start-ups to large defense contracts.

VA invites all interested persons and businesses to attend.  More information is available at [www.nationalveteransconference.com](http://www.nationalveteransconference.com) and [www.va.gov/OSDBU](http://www.va.gov/OSDBU).

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