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State Working to Help the Military Find Local Jobs

LANSING, Mich. (AP) – Michigan will partner with a major national business group to help active-duty members find jobs after leaving the military.

The state is among three chosen to pilot a new initiative by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program, Gov. Rick Snyder said March 18 at his economic summit in Grand Rapids.

With extra promotion by the program's "All Vet States" initiative, state officials are hoping to raise Michigan's visibility on U.S. bases around the world when service members and spouses begin thinking about where to locate after military life.

The state anticipates that between 30,000 and 50,000 new veterans will be moving to the state of Michigan in the next three to five years.

"It's really about illustrating Michigan as an opportunity as a state to transition to and begin the next phase of their life," Jeff Barnes, director of the state Veterans Affairs Agency, said in a phone interview.

Hiring our Heroes will feature Michigan, Iowa and Tennessee on its website and link to state websites that feature additional resources on available benefits for veterans and the advantages for employers who hire them.

Barnes said that Lansing Community College gives credits to military medics who are studying to become EMTs and nurses.

'Top Employer' Awarded Valeo for HR Management

Automotive supplier Valeo has been certified by the Top Employer Institute as a 2014 Top Employer in the United States.

Top Employer certification is awarded to organizations meeting the highest standards in human resources management based on criteria, such as benefits and working conditions, training and skills development, career development and culture management, said Valeo spokesperson Brad Warner.

Valeo United States joins Valeo's European and Asian operations as 2014 Top Employers.

The award was presented to Valeo North America president Françoise Colpron and Valeo United States Human Resources director Dennis Clark at a special ceremony March 20 at the company's North American headquarters in Troy.

"This certification recognizes our human resources management strategy, which supports our objective to be an Employer

of Choice in North America," said Colpron. "We strive to provide our team members with a diverse, inclusive and well-balanced place to work."

Valeo's Human Resources policy is based on the group's culture, forged around operational excellence and a set of shared values: ethics, transparency, empowerment, professionalism, teamwork and well-being at work, said Warner.

"Valeo encourages creative thinking and risk-taking to improve our product and business solutions and processes," said Clark. "This approach allows us to continue to innovate and grow."

Warner said Valeo has more than doubled its United States employment between 2010 and 2013 and plans to hire more than 160 engineers in this country this year.

"Valeo has a world-class Human Resources toolbox that allows team members to develop

to their full potential," said Clark. "This certification will strengthen our ability to hire and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce."

The Top Employers Institute globally has been certifying excellence in the conditions that

employers create for their people since 1991, Warner said.

The Institute identifies and certifies the companies that ensure optimal employee conditions, where people can develop themselves personally and professionally.



From left, Clark, Employer Institute's Johann Labuschagne, Colpron.

Viper Fans Decry Chrysler Edict to Destroy School-Used Cars

As the saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished.

Dodge has come under fire for requiring the Vipers that the company donated to schools be destroyed when the schools were finished with the vehicles.

Explaining Chrysler's position, Mike Driehorst, editorial director of Online Media for Chrysler wrote a blog that discussed the issue.

"There's nothing like car culture passion," Driehorst wrote. "We see it every day, and a lot of people have witnessed it since (recently) when reports of Chrysler Group asking schools to 'crush' early Dodge Vipers within the next couple of weeks."

"While we very deeply appreciate – and can relate to – the passionate outpouring to #SaveTheVipers, we do need to clear the air about what's going on and what we did. So, let's set the record straight."

"About 10 years ago, Chrysler

Group donated a number of Dodge Viper vehicles to various trade schools for educational purposes. As part of the donation process, it is routine, standard procedure – and stipulated

**"Let these cars
live out their
golden years..."**

**– Mike Driehorst,
Chrysler**

in our agreements – that whenever vehicles are donated to institutions for education purposes that they are to be destroyed when they are no longer needed for their intended educational purposes."

Driehorst added that with advancements in automotive technology over the past decade, it is unlikely that these vehicles offer any educational value to students.

"We definitely understand and appreciate the historical significance of the Viper," Driehorst wrote. "And, we are sure to maintain any of the legendary models and designs for historic purposes. It's our heritage, so, of course we take great pride in preserving it. Chrysler Group maintains all of the legendary models and designs we produce and manufacture to help preserve our heritage."

However, none of the vehicles at the schools fit into this category, Driehorst wrote. To recap, he continued, the Vipers in question have no significant historical value, have not been involved in any accidents and serve no educational purpose – which is what they were designed to do at first.

This answer did not satisfy an-

gry Viper lovers. Driehorst's blog had a comments section. One replier wrote, "Would it kill you to spare these cars? Crushing them is a public relations black eye but it would be a PR home run if you decided to let the schools keep them, or auction them off and give the proceeds to the schools."

"Let these cars live out their golden years in some collector's climate-controlled garage where they only come out for car shows to delight spectators. Crushing muscle cars of any era leaves a very sour taste in the mouths of car lovers, especially Mopar addicts."

Other comments were less kind, with posters saying that Chrysler was being stupid and they would never buy another product again.

When asked for further comment, Dan Reid of Chrysler Group Communications, said he didn't have anything else to share beyond what Driehorst wrote.

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