President Bush intends to nominate Frederico Juarbe Jr. as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training. Juarbe is currently the VFW’s Director of National Veterans Service. As of press time, the official announcement had not been made.

“Fred has long been recognized in the veteran community for his contributions and staunch support for our nation’s veterans. He is truly a veteran’s advocate. I applaud the administration for their intentions to nominate Fred and have no doubt that he will be easily confirmed,” said John F. Gwizdak, VFW commander-in-chief.

As director, Juarbe has managed an assistance program to veterans through a national network of professional veterans’ advocates who are located at VA facilities throughout the nation. In addition, the office assists veterans in applying for entitlements and benefits, along with representing them throughout the process. This year he has expanded the VFW outreach service to the major military discharge points for military personnel who are transitioning to civilian life through the VA’s Benefits Delivery at Discharge program.

During his career as a professional veterans’ advocate, Juarbe has worked closely with federal and state agencies in formulating policy beneficial to veterans, their dependents and survivors. He has contributed to the development of major legislative measures enacted during the past three decades that have expanded benefits to the veterans’ community in the areas of education and training, rehabilitation and employment.

Stars Turn Out for 21st Century Workforce Summit

The MCI Center in Washington, DC has seen its share of inaugural balls, political fundraisers, rock concerts, Stanley Cup playoff games, and an NBA All-Star gala. But these events paled in comparison to the lineup of business, labor and government stars that turned out on June 20 for the Summit on the 21st Century Workforce, organized by Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Headlining an all-star cast was The Boss himself, and, in this case, that doesn’t mean Springsteen. President George W. Bush set the theme for the conference by saying that education is key in preparing Americans for a competitive workforce. The link between education and the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for a competitive 21st century workforce was echoed by almost every speaker at the day-long event.

Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told a pre-conference breakfast gathering that the great technological growth experienced by our nation during the last decade must now be integrated into the very fabric of society. The educational system, he said, would play a major role in this process and that lifelong learning should become mandatory in order to close the skills gap which threatens to short circuit our economic growth.

Calling the Summit “a wake up call to America about the needs of the workforce,” Secretary Chao outlined the three major issues facing business, labor, and government as they work in partnership to build an effective workforce for the future: (1) The growing skills gap between what workers know how to do and what tomorrow’s jobs are demanding; (2) A shrinking workforce because birth rates are declining and baby boomers are retiring; and (3) The work place revolution driven by workers who are changing jobs, working away from the office, working flexible hours, and demanding more quality time for family and other activities. “These trends will have huge economic consequences if we don’t act on them,” Secretary Chao said.

The conference was organized around a series of panels moderated by ABC’s Cokie Roberts and Fox’s Tony Snow. The MCI Center was linked via satellite television to various employment and educational centers around the country so people viewing from remote locations such as the Dayton Ohio Job Corps Center and the Louisville One-Stop Center were able to pose questions to panel members.

President Bush’s ASVET nominee, Frederico Juarbe Jr.
Message from the Office of the Assistant Secretary

Stan Seidel
Acting ASVET

It may seem a bit strange to talk about the Labor Department’s annual Salute To All American Veterans, which VETS hosts every November, in the middle of a Washington DC heat wave. But this year’s theme is honoring VETS’ service providers and we need your suggestions for appropriate organizations and/or individuals to recognize.

Service providers to be recognized will come from Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HRVP), Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP), local OneStop offices, TAP, SESA, Federal Contractors, and DVOP/LVER. Each category of service provider should be evaluated on criteria specific to the type of services rendered. To help you in your considerations, VETS has put out a Director’s Memo listing the criteria which should be considered. RAVETS and DVETS have copies of the memo.

Let me give you an example. For HVRP service providers, consider the percentage of placements to enrollments, cost per placement, networking, linkages with other service providers (HUD, VA etc), endorsements and/or special recognitions, and past performance. For TAP, consider base support of program (facilities and assigned personnel), attendance, linkages with employers and other service provides and employment resources provided.

Nominations are to be sent via the RAVETS, who will review the nominations, include their recommendation, and forward to Gordon Berg in the National Office. Gordon will head a committee to make recommendations to the ASVET for final selection.

We need to hear from you very soon so that we can make notifications and the service provider can make arrangements to have a representative travel to Washington to receive the award from Secretary Chao. This is a chance to recognize the good work our service provider partners provide to veterans at the local level. I know there are a lot of worthy organizations out there; let us know about them so that they can be considered.

See ASVET Nomination, continued on page 2

disability benefits and healthcare. In addition, he has served on numerous federal task forces and advisory committees ranging from rehabilitation and employment of disabled veterans to assessing the provision of long-term care for aging veterans.

Born in Puerto Rico, he was raised in Brooklyn, New York. After graduating from high school, he joined the Army in September 1962, serving as a medical corpsman with the 82nd Airborne Division during the deployment to the Dominican Republic in 1965 until his discharge in October of the same year. He worked as management trainee and with a subsidiary of the Dale Carnegie Leadership Training Institute until he joined the VFW as a service officer in 1971. He attended the University of New Mexico from 1971 to 1973 and has received training in organizational management, team dynamics, public speaking, human relations and strategic management and planning.

Sports Conference to Address Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities

Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA) will host a three-day conference highlighting employment opportunities in sports and recreation for people with disabilities. Challenge 2001: Disabled Sports Employment Conference will be held September 5-7 in Washington, DC.

“Despite the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act 10 years ago, and the growing independence of people with disabilities, there is still an unemployment rate greater than 60% in this segment of the population,” noted Kirk Bauer, executive director of DS/USA.

A series of seminars will explore topics such as hiring guidelines and workplace accommodations as specified in the ADA, interviewing techniques, recreation accessibility laws, small business opportunities and federal work incentive programs with new healthcare benefits.

For more information contact DS/USA at (301) 217-0960, TTY (301) 217-0963 or fax (301) 217-0968.
Enhancing Employment Opportunities for Military Spouses

Spouses are too often the forgotten factor when it comes to recruitment, retention, and the transitioning of military personnel back into the civilian world. But a mid-level working group from several government agencies, including VETS, is looking at ways to level the playing field using telemarketing and Internet-based employment opportunities to create portable careers, provide remote training, and enhance job prospects for spouses of military and other Federal career personnel who must frequently transfer or work outside the United States.

Calling itself the Spouses Telework Employment Partnership (STEP), the working group has participants from the Departments of Labor, Defense, and State; the General Services Administration (GSA); and the National Guard Bureau. While it has been meeting since August, 2000, the group’s proposals have yet to receive official sanction from any of the agencies except State, which has set up a pilot job search assistance program in three cities in New Mexico.

Even though it is still in developmental stages, STEP has no shortage of wide-ranging ideas. Its objectives are to increase domestic and foreign private sector career opportunities, especially with respect to telework by serving as basis for an expanded program of remote training and teleworking facilities and a database of remote work opportunities; augmenting existing military and federal programs to assist spouses in all stages of their professional development.

STEP’s near-term goals include formalizing partnerships with government agencies with deployable missions, chartering a board of partnership members to administer activities of STEP; authorize the board to enter into partnerships with entities to provide appropriate services; make greater use of GSA and National Guard remote work sites for teleworking spouses; augment employment and resume databases for spouses in conjunction with America’s Career Kit and Defense Department Job Search; and improve OPM guidance on spouse qualifications.

In order to facilitate information sharing among the participants, VETS hosted a meeting of the working group to inform them about resources VETS and DOL could bring to the program. Stan Seidel talked about VETS’ network of TAP sites which could inform the spouses of transitioning service members about STEP; Dave Morman from ETA talked about the many components of America’s Career Kit; and Anthony Swope, director of the department’s Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer, and Labor Services (ATELS) talked about how the Workforce Investment Act had given the agency new responsibilities, including designing training programs through employer/worker involvement.

Anyone interested in the progress of the STEP working group should contact Glenn Woodley at GSA on (202) 273-4667 or e-mail at glenn.woodley@gsa.gov.

Bill Expands Health/Insurance Coverage

A “family-friendly” benefits bill expanding health and insurance coverage for surviving dependents of veterans and service members, said House VA Committee Chairman Chris Smith.

“This bill is a reminder of what is owed to the survivors of our servicemen and women, and although much remains to be done by this Congress, it is a harbinger of what we can accomplish to keep our commitment to veterans,” he said after passage of the Senate-amended H.R. 801, the Veterans’ Survivor Benefits Improvements Act of 2001. For more details log on to http://veterans.house.gov/

Veterans Benefits Act of 2001

Vietnam veterans exposed to herbicides and Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses would gain from a draft bill the House VA Subcommittee on Benefits passed by unanimous voice vote recently.

The Veterans Benefits Act of 2001 would add Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2) to the list of service-connected diseases presumed for Vietnam veterans, and expand the definition of undiagnosed illnesses for Persian Gulf War veterans to include fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic multisymptom illnesses, and any other illnesses that cannot be defined.

A related provision would authorize the Secretary of Veterans of Affairs to protect the service connection grant of a Gulf War veteran who participates in VA-sponsored medical research.

The measure is a sequel to H.R. 801, the Veterans’ Survivor Benefits Improvement Act, which added $100 million in new health care and insurance benefits for benefits and surviving spouses and was signed into law by President Bush on June 5.

See Hill, continued on page 4
House Votes to Increase Veterans’ Education Benefits

The House passed legislation (H.R. 1291) to hike veterans’ education benefits over the next three years from $23,400 to $39,600, a 70 percent increase over current law. The legislation will boost the monthly education benefit from $650 to $1100 by October 1, 2002.

H.R. 1291, the 21st Century Montgomery GI Bill Enhancement Act, has over 100 co-sponsors and is supported by the VFW, The American Legion, VVA, PVA and more than a dozen veterans service, military, and higher education organizations, as well as the Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs, the Honorable Anthony J. Principi. With the approval, H.R. 1291 now moves to the Senate for their consideration.

Enhancing Funeral Ceremonies for Vets

DoD is teaming with veterans service organizations across the country to enhance traditional funeral ceremonies that honor the nation’s military veterans. Representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, the National Cemetery Administration, the Funeral Directors Association and other groups met June 28 at The American Legion headquarters for the announcement of the Authorized Provider Partnership Program’s debut.

Labor Secretary Announces Millions in Grants to Homeless Veterans

Homeless veterans in 15 states will receive occupational training, job search, and placement assistance, thanks to more than $6.2 million in grants announced by Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao.

The grants to 28 state and local public agencies and non-profit organizations will provide a variety of services, including job search and placement assistance, career counseling, remedial education, classroom and on-the-job training, and support services such as transportation and transitional housing so that veterans can keep the unsubsidized jobs they get through the programs.

The grants, authorized by Title VII of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, are administered by the Labor Department’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS). The grant recipients were chosen by a competitive process. VETS received 58 applications for funding and awarded 28 grants. Each recipient received the total amount of funds requested to run the programs. VETS expects that more than 3,000 homeless veterans will enter employment as a result of these grants and receive an average hourly wage of more than $8.

California, the state with more veterans than any other, received seven grants totaling more than $1.4 million. New York received four grants totaling just over $846,000.

Web Site Compares Military Specialties to Civilian Job Certification, Licensing Requirements

Occupational credentials, such as a license or certification, are increasingly common requirements for many civilian jobs. Now, thanks to a web site developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, current and former military personnel can easily learn about licenses and certifications they need to enter a wide variety of employment fields.

Known as UMET, Using your Military Experience and Training, the web site has two key components, a section designed for service members and veterans seeking information about civilian licensure and certification and a section intended for employers seeking access to a qualified pool of skilled employees who may have learned their skills while in the military.

The section on transitioning to civilian careers answers frequently asked questions about civilian licensing and certification, the requirements for 25 civilian occupations most relevant to transitioning military personnel, and links to other information sources on licensing and certification.

The section for employers gives an overview on major military occupational specialties, examples of the comparability of military and civilian training, types of documentation available to certify military training, and some examples of joint initiatives between the Labor Department’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) and employers to help veterans move into civilian jobs requiring certification or licensing.

UMET can be accessed at www.umet-vets.dol.gov. See the Sources/Resources section on page 7 to request a UMET brochure.
IT Grants to Help Vets in Connecticut, Indiana

More than 160 veterans in Connecticut and Indiana will get information technology (IT) training and job search assistance, thanks to two $250,000 grants from VETS as part of its Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) discretionary fund. VETS received 17 grant proposals from a Solicitation for Grant Application published in the Federal Register in May.

Career Resources, Inc. of Bridgeport, a non-profit organization with experience in creating and administering welfare-to-work programs, will work closely with veterans employment representatives in the Connecticut Department of labor, the local One-Stop Center, the Regional workforce Development Board, and other community service providers to find, assess, train and place 60 veterans in jobs averaging from $9 to $15 per hour. Local employers have already pledged 50 positions to graduates of the program.

Interlocal Association, a locally based intergovernmental organization providing community and work force development programs, will work with similar groups in Indiana to help 100 veterans get IT jobs paying an average of $15 per hour.

Participants in Connecticut will have four occupational skills training options: basic curriculum in computer repair and A+ certification; Microsoft applications; web page design; and NT Server and Workstation 2000 and Advanced Microsoft certified courses. Length of training varies between eight and 11 weeks, depending on the courses selected. Veterans completing the training will receive certificates attesting to their skill attainment. Career Resources also offers a comprehensive online e-learning option for self-paced enhanced training. Every participant will have access to this advanced training at no cost for up to one year.

Interlocal will work with area information technology services providers, including Ivy Tech State College, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana and Ball State University to provide customized training leading to occupations such as computer support specialist, systems administrator.

See IT Grants, continued on page 7

TAP Benefits Spouses But Few Attend Workshops

“We came into the military together, even though he was the only one in uniform. And we’re leaving together, so we both need this information.”

That direct, common sense statement, explained why Rita Carmona was sitting next to her husband Roberto in the front of the classroom at Great Lakes Naval Training Center’s Family Services Center last April for the beginning of an intensive five-day introduction to the civilian career world. Before it was over, Roberto and Rita got current labor market information from experienced employment counselors, used electronic resources to conduct a job search, learned how to write a resume that gets noticed, practiced preparing for and taking interviews that spotlight their unique skills and experiences, listened to experts explain where to turn for service-related health and housing benefits, and heard from community-based organizations and employers that could help them successfully move into the civilian world.

Over the years, more than 1.4 million service members have attended TAP which is now offered at 170 military installations all over the United States. While most of the workshops last only three days, spouses rarely avail themselves of the wealth of information they offer. Rita was the only spouse in a class of 37.

A recent study by the Department of Defense on spouse employment assistance clearly shows that spouses of transitioning service members need to attend TAP workshops, too. Fifty-four percent of active duty service members are married and 47 percent have children. The proportion of enlisted military spouses in the labor force has increased from 56 percent in 1987 to 87 percent in 1997. And the majority of enlisted military spouses are less than 34 years old.

TAP at Great Lakes takes five days and there are workshops for retirees and separatees. Roberto Carmona wanted his wife to attend all five days. Even though Rita works at night and they have two children, they rearranged Rita’s work schedule and prevailed on her mother to take care of the kids.

“I was 17 when I enlisted in the Marines,” said Roberto. “After 10 years in the military, I want to start my own company designing technical electronic components. But if it doesn’t work right away, I want us both to be ready to enter the job market until I can get financial backing,” he said.

Married for nine years, the Chicago natives realize that leaving the military means more than just taking off a uniform and going to work at a different location. It means changing a whole way of life and Rita admitted to being “more than a little anxious.”

“Easing anxiety is just as much a part of TAP as providing the latest employment data,” said Donn Merritt, a TAP counselor and instructor at Great Lakes. “Too many service members, especially officers, think they can take in all the information and then tell their spouses what they need to know.”

Merritt speaks from years of experience. He is part of a cadre of professionally trained workshop facilitators from the state employment service and military family support centers. Merritt went through TAP at Great Lakes in 1992 and has seen many changes in content of the workshops. But he has not seen more spouses.

“Spouses could really benefit from some of the special services we offer at the Great Lakes TAP,” said Merritt. “For instance, we are probably the only TAP that offers the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality preference instrument. It helps you make good decisions for yourself and your family,” he said.

See TAP/Spouses, continued on page 7
• The sixth annual Southern Oregon Veterans Benefit Golf Tournament was held at the Bandon Dunes Golf Resort this past April. Veterans and NVTI alumni were well represented. Coos Bay LVER Mark Dostal and DVOP Frank Carpenter were tournament directors. Medford LVER Keith Pearson and Grants Pass LVER Russ McBride played, and Bend DVOP “Rocky” Barker and his foursome took second place with a 10 under par 62. Started in 1996, this tournament has evolved into one of the fastest-growing and popular benefit tournaments in the state of Oregon. This year’s tournament attracted 36 foursomes for a total of 144 golfers from throughout Oregon as well as Idaho and Washington and raised over $14,000. Wonderful!

• The Oklahoma American Legion presented certificates of appreciation to DVOP Chris Sanford and LVER Donnie Sarratt for rescuing a 70-year old plaque that was tossed in a dumpster. The plaque, which honors disabled veterans of World War I, had been set in the base of a flagpole at the former site of the Norman Veterans Center, now the Community Services Building. During renovations, the plaque was removed and was set to be discarded until Chris and Donnie found it. The plaque has been restored and rededicated and now hangs on the front wall of the new Norman Veterans Center. Oklahoma American Legion Commander Don Schulenberg expressed appreciation to the pair for reclaiming a vital piece of memorabilia. We’ll add our own applause to that!

• Congratulations to Fayetteville, North Carolina DVOP Juan Ruiz-Campos who was recently selected as the DVOP of the Year for IAPES for his state. Great news, Juan!

• New York ADVET James Donahue is the recipient of the prestigious title, Legionnaire of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. The honor recognizes James’ services to his veterans’ community and his active support of the Cambodian refugee population in New York and Pennsylvania. The Chapel of Four Chaplains is an internationally recognized organization that seeks and honors citizens form all walks of life who promote selfless service above and beyond their professional and organizational positions. Outstanding, James!

• The veteran staff from Palm Springs and Indio EDD offices in California promoted Veterans Appreciation Month in a variety of ways, none of them costing their offices any money. Acting individually and as a group, Joe Lauria, Juan Montez, Alfredo Carrizosa and John Vilalta held a workshop on veterans health benefits and employment, appeared on a local cable TV show discussing hiring veterans, received proclamations from local cities, had Cathedral City and the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce mail newsletters to many households promoting the month, and secured free bus place cards for over six months to publicize their cause. Great work, gentlemen!

• The Ardmore, Oklahoma local office has lots to cheer about! It received state awards from The American Legion for services to veterans and from the VFW for services to veterans. This was the third year in a row for the VFW award. And Weldon F. Brown received the DAV’s LVER of the Year Award. Keep up the fantastic work!

• Michael G. McLane, an LVER at the Lackawanna County CareerLink in Scranton, has been presented with the Outstanding LVER Award for 2000-01 by the Department of Pennsylvania, DAV. Way to go, Michael!

• Thumbs up to Mike Murdy, a Santa Barbara, California LVER! Mike recently received a “Commendation Resolution for 20 Years of Service to Local Veterans” from the Santa Barbara County Board of supervisors. Bravo, Mike!

• Kudos to LVER Merritt Nord of the Somerset Job Center in Pennsylvania! He received the DAV’s Outstanding DVER Award for Pennsylvania and the Outstanding DVER award from The American Legion. Additionally, the Somerset office won second place for the state as Outstanding Local Office of Employment Service from the VFW. Great news!

• Bill Baker, DVOP in Riverside, California, used his networking abilities to obtain a special gift for NVTI. Bill contacted US Senator Barbara Boxer and asked her to secure an American flag that had flown over the capitol building in Washington D.C. He explained that he wanted to present it to NVTI in recognition of the work done on behalf of veterans. Senator Boxer agreed and NVTI now has the flag and accompanying certificate proudly displayed in the administrative offices. Thank you, Bill!

VETS NET Page 6
The Informational Interview: Have you suggested that your job seeking clients try using an informational interview to find out more about a certain occupation or company? Get a copy of this document and tell them all about it!

Know Your Audience When Public Speaking: When you speak to a group of people, it helps to know as much about the audience as possible. Check out this resource to learn what to do. Call the Resource Center or go to the website http://www.school-for-champions.com/speaking/audience.htm.

disAbility.gov is a great one-stop online access to resources, services, and information available throughout the federal government. The New Freedom Initiative for People with Disabilities is also part of the president’s administration goals, which calls for government to use information technology to deliver government services anytime, anywhere. Be informed and check this helpful site out. http://www.disAbility.gov

FirstGov.com is the only official U.S. Government portal to 30 million pages of government information, services, and online transactions. The site offers a powerful search engine that searches every word of every U.S. government document in a quarter of a second or less. Lots of helpful information can be found here in an easy to use format. http://www.firstgov.com

The Website Review is an opinion expressed by VETS NET contributors and is not an endorsement of products, services or information contained in any website. We encourage readers to form their own judgments about any website mentioned here.

IT Grants, continued from page 5

Ken Cronk is a contract marketing specialist at the Family Services Center who is constantly trying new ways to get the word out about TAP. In addition to notices in the weekly “Great Lakes Bulletin” and in each command’s “plan of the week,” Cronk is developing an e-mail list which can reach service families at home.

Rita Carmona says she learned about TAP from the best source of all, her husband. When asked how she rated the workshop, she said it met all her expectations. “I don’t know why every spouse doesn’t come to TAP workshops,” she said.
The panel members read like a corporate who’s who of American business. J.W. Marriott, Jr., chairman and CEO of Marriott International talked about his corporation’s success integrating welfare-to-work employees into career path occupations; Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft Corporation talked about how computers were bringing people with disabilities into the mainstream economy; Jeff Taylor, CEO of Monster.com assumed the role of a revival tent meeting preacher to drive home the fact that today the internet is a river that runs through all facets of our lives and that someday soon, everything will be “e-something.”

For many in the audience, the highlight of the conference occurred in the afternoon when U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell roared into the auditorium on a cherry red heavyweight Harley Davidson to introduce that company’s CEO, Jeffrey Bleustein. Dressed in his leathers and a shirt that matched his bike, Campbell lauded the cooperative labor relations partnership Harley Davidson had established with the two unions representing its workers and offered it as a model for workplace relations in the coming economy. Bleustein linked the partnership of union and management to Harley’s economic strength in a very competitive market.

Organized labor had its “boss” at the Summit, too. John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, talked about valuing the contributions of working people and their ability to contribute to the success of any enterprise. He took special care to thank the employees of the Department of Labor for their work, saying they were the best friends working Americans had in government.

Not to be outdone, the government officials used the conference to announce some new initiatives of their own. Secretary Chao announced that President Bush had signed an Executive Order creating the Office of the 21st Century Workforce that would work with a new presidential council to advise on labor issues. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by Secretary Chao and Secretary of Education Rod Paige to initiate joint ventures between the two agencies including enhanced reading and math skills for adult workers and a program for at-risk youth participating in Job Corps to earn high school diplomas through distance learning and local public schools. Another joint venture will share information and other resources between America’s Job Bank and Monster.com. Finally, a new web site will soon be operational with information on the President’s New Freedom’s Initiative to help Americans with disabilities enter the workforce.

The Summit also included a bustling job fair. More than 120 companies had information exhibits on the concourse level of the MCI center. The booths were packed with young people, older people, and people just looking to better their employment opportunities. Noting that the Summit was actually enabling job seekers to find work, Secretary Chao said: “We are discussing the theoretical and offering the practical.”