

Dept. of Military Affairs: Unique partnership connects civilian employers with Army Guard recruits

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When Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiters speak with potential recruits, the conversation is typically about the kind of military jobs available. But in recent years, recruits have also had the option to consider certain civilian jobs available to them as well.

The U.S. Army Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) program began two decades ago as a way to connect active-duty service members with civilian jobs at the end of their military commitment. A few years ago, the program became available to the Army National Guard, and is used during the recruiting process.

“It provides that option of employment for some of these kids,” said Sgt. 1st Class Rocco Sylvester, a Wisconsin Army National Guard recruiter. “For younger applicants, like high schoolers, it’s the opportunity to have some sort of job interview and the option to have a job when they get back from training.”

Sylvester said that dozens of Wisconsin companies currently participate in the Army PaYS program, and others have expressed interest as well. Recruits interested in the program will sit down with guidance counselors at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) to determine which companies they might wish to work for.

“They get the opportunity to sit through an interview with five different companies or maybe five different job postings at one company, for a job they have interest in getting when they get back,” Sylvester explained.

One of the people Sylvester recruited years ago now works as the human resources manager at the Kalihari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. A business lunch to discuss a potential career fair led to discussion about the Army PaYS program.

“They just loved the idea of being partners with the military,” Sylvester said, “and it helps them as well finding employees throughout the nation.”

Kalihari was recently recognized as an Army PaYS program member with a ceremony in Round Rock, Texas, where a new Kalihari resort opened.

The Army PaYS program is a strategic partnership between the U.S. Army and a cross-section of companies, corporations and public sector agencies, and represents the Army’s effort to partner with America’s business community and reconnect America with its Army.