



**Charlie Crist**  
Governor

**Monesia T. Brown**  
Director

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

APRIL 17, 2008

**CONTACT: GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE**  
(850) 488-5394

## **Governor Crist Launches Florida Vets First**

*~ Initiative provides online one-stop services for veterans' information ~*

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today highlighted an initiative to better meet the needs of veterans returning to Florida after deployment and upon leaving military service. Florida Vets First offers a comprehensive clearinghouse for the many key services available to veterans and their families.

Florida Vets First is a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Workforce Florida, Inc. The new initiative creates a unified, seamless approach to addressing the needs of Florida's military veterans, service members and their families.

"Our brave men and women in uniform put their lives on the line and often their personal affairs on hold so that we may enjoy a free and democratic way of life," Governor Crist said. "We are committed to serving the more than 1.7 million veterans who defended our nation and who now call our great state home."

At the interactive Web site, [www.FloridaVetsFirst.com](http://www.FloridaVetsFirst.com), veterans and their families will find a one-stop resource for information and links to services ranging from employment and training assistance to health care, aid for the homeless, housing and benefits.

Among those joining the governor for the announcement was Sgt. 1st Class Abraham Scott. Scott retired from the U.S. Army after 20 years of service, and while finishing his bachelor's degree in social work at Florida State University, he received resume writing and job search assistance from the Workforce plus One-Stop Career Center in Tallahassee. With the support he received from Workforce plus, Scott found a job as an employment consultant with the Leon Advocacy and Resource Center where he helps developmentally disabled adults in Leon and surrounding counties to find jobs. Scott is also currently working toward a master's degree in social work at Florida A&M University.

"The veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, in addition to traditional health and long-term care services, are seeking employment, housing and educational opportunities for themselves and their families," said Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Director LeRoy Collins Jr. "The Florida Vets First initiative is a great start for these young men and women who seek consolidated need-to-know information on federal, state

and local benefits, education, employment opportunities and health care services earned by virtue of their military service.”

Following the event, veterans and National Guardsmen had an opportunity to explore [www.FloridaVetsFirst.com](http://www.FloridaVetsFirst.com) in AWI's Mobile One-Stop Career Center, a 45-foot van equipped with nine computer workstations and a training room that can accommodate eight additional computer stations that have Internet access.