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Idaho Transportation Department

News Release

10/27/2011

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho wins national award for training program for injured veterans

BOISE - Idaho's Wounded Warrior Transportation Job Training pilot program, which helps veterans injured in Afghanistan and Iraq find meaningful employment in the transportation field, has earned a national award for its success.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) selected the joint project of the Idaho Transportation Department and Idaho Department of Labor for its 2011 President's Transportation Award in Administration. The award was given for "having performed exemplary service during the year furthering transportation activities."

ITD Director Brian W. Ness accepted the award on behalf of the departments. It was presented at the AASHTO national convention Oct. 13-17 in Detroit.

More than 20 percent of the combat veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot find work upon their return to the United States, and the rate is twice that for those who have been wounded. The Wounded Warriors initiative helps break down economic barriers to re-employment by providing financial assistance for training, including day care, transportation and records, licensing and certification.

Michelle George of ITD's Human Resource Services office, and Chris Ramos of the Department of Labor wrote an application that resulted in a \$99,300 grant from the Federal Highway Administration.

The training program has 20 Idaho veterans currently in school or who recently graduated. Of those veterans, 15 are Commercial Driver's License participants, three graduated from flagger/safety courses, and two earned CDL license renewals through the program. Training is offered through the College of Western Idaho in Nampa.

"We're ready to move forward on a statewide proposal as additional money becomes available," George said.
