



Capitol Comments

Newsletter from your
Iowa State Representative
Richard Anderson

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Hooah! Booah! Transformational Leadership from the Iowa National Guard - Can We Apply It to Iowa's Next Generation?

On occasion you meet one of those really outstanding men - a competent leader of high personal character. In this case, I am speaking about Major General Ron Dardis, the Iowa National Guard Adjutant General, who recently presented his annual report to the Iowa legislature. I serve on the budget sub-committee which builds the budget for the Iowa Department of Public Defense (National Guard) under General Dardis' leadership. It was inspiring to hear him.

Following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, General Dardis led the transformation of the Iowa National Guard from a military reserve unit to an award-winning combat ready military force. Read on...

Hooah!

Since 2002, Iowa's Guard has been rated in the top 10 by the Department of Defense and has twice received the top award. *Hooah!* Iowa's Guard is the only state to have received the point-based Gold Award for installation management. *Hooah!* Although Iowa makes up only 1% of the US population, Iowa's men and women make up 2% of the nation's National Guard. *Hooah!* Iowa's Guard is at 100% authorized strength and under General Dardis'

leadership it has exceeded national soldier and airman retention goals. *Hooah!* Due to Iowa Guard training readiness, 1000 Iowa Guardsmen were selected, with only one week notice, to serve in the 2009 Presidential Inauguration making up 1/7th of the total force. *Hooah!* Over 11,000 members of the Iowa Guard have served on federal active duty since 9/11 in the Global War on Terrorism and 600 are currently deployed with another 200 preparing for deployment. The US looks to the Iowa Guard because it knows our guard can deliver. *Hooah!* Beyond this federal mission, 4000 members were called up to active duty and pre-positioned for timely response to assist our fellow Iowans during the devastating Iowa floods of 2008. *Hooah!*

Now this transformation did not happen through only one man. General Dardis is quick to recognize his team. It is just that General Dardis knows how to lead a team which can envision the future ideal and make it a reality through planning, teamwork and strong character.

Now let me take you to one of our most pressing matters... Iowa's future workforce.

Brain Drain. Booah!

Iowa attracts college students but does not retain college graduates. We are in the top 5 states in recruiting out-of-state college students and rank number 1 in the Midwest. In 2006 Iowa had a net gain of 8200 out-of-state students. Surveys show that native Iowans and in-coming students want to stay in Iowa, yet we are ranked 4th worst in the nation for losing these educated young people. *Booah!* This is the so-called "brain drain."

No Jobs. Booah!

Why are these college graduates leaving a state in which they want to live? One third of the next generation of young people are obtaining a college degree, but

only 12 % of available Iowa jobs are for college graduates. Those college graduates who remain in Iowa are underemployed. Out of 10 mid-western states, Iowa ranks number 9 in wages. Iowa's wages are 20% lower than the national average and Iowa's lower cost of living does not make up the wage gap.

Booah!

Booah! to Hooah!

It is up to us now. Can we find the transformational leadership General Dardis brings to the Iowa National Guard to keep young people in Iowa? It takes a team. It takes vision. It takes planning. Iowa needs the teamwork, vision, planning and commitment which Congress demonstrated with the Apollo space program in 1961 to transform the Iowa economy and create jobs for future Iowans. Let us work together to come up with creative solutions. Please let me know if you have any ideas.