

Governor Quinn Launches Cyber Challenge

Written by Richard Martin
Monday, 01 April 2013 12:27

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Competition Connects Veterans and Students with Careers in Cybersecurity

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by the Cyber Aces Foundation to announce the Illinois Governor’s Cyber Challenge, a statewide competition that will fill mission-critical jobs in the emerging cybersecurity workforce. The announcement is part of Governor Quinn’s agenda to increase public safety and help Illinois residents find employment. The Cyber Challenge is designed to provide a pathway of learning and workforce training for Veterans and students.

“As technology becomes increasingly sophisticated, the threat to our nation’s cybersecurity continues to grow,” Governor Quinn said. “Connecting our highly-skilled Veterans and students with these 21st century jobs is a solid way to increase national security and create another pathway to employment.”

Illinois is one of the first states to hold a Cyber Challenge. Federal officials are quickly expanding cybersecurity forces to counter evolving threats from abroad. For example, the Defense Department’s Cyber Command plans to increase its workforce to 4,000, up from 900. Private sector opportunities in cybersecurity are also rapidly expanding. Currently, cybersecurity careers are the second-fastest growing positions in information technology (IT). They also are among the most secure and the highest salaried in the IT field.

The Cyber Aces Foundation is utilizing Governors’ Cyber Challenges across the country to

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help identify individuals with the necessary skill set for cybersecurity jobs in order to help meet the growing demand for the profession.

“Similar to our shortage of fighter pilots at the start of World War II, we now have a critical shortage of skilled cyber defenders,” Cyber Aces Founder Alan Paller said. “And like the pilot training programs of that era, Cyber Aces initiatives, such as the Illinois State Championship, are how we will create the specialists we need.”

The cyber initiative includes advanced online training in cybersecurity at no cost to Illinois residents, a special Veterans Cyber Camp for the top performing Veterans and the championship competition to identify the state’s top cyber talent for public and private sector opportunities.

To ensure Veterans know of this opportunity, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) will use its IllinoisJobLink.com system to contact more than 20,000 Veterans. IllinoisJobLink.com is the state’s help-wanted job board that helps employers identify new hires, and ensures that business owners are aware of available state and federal tax incentives as well as other programs designed to help grow our economy.

Veterans who believe they have the skills and aptitude for cybersecurity are invited to take a free entry-level education and testing program that focuses on fundamentals with emphasis on three critical modules: networking, operating systems and system administration. A tutorial is included in each module and registration is open today. The quiz competition is April 16-29. Top-performing Veterans will be invited to the Summer Cyber Camp. Another entry-level testing competition will occur in the fall and be open to Veterans, students and other job seekers. A state championship event featuring top-performers from both quiz cycles will occur in the spring.

About Cyber Aces

The Cyber Aces Foundation is a not-for-profit working to discover talent and provide a pathway to employment in critical cybersecurity jobs. The foundation challenges students, Veterans and jobseekers with training and competition, develops their abilities with cybersecurity education and prepares them for cybersecurity careers. It is a 501(c)(3) organization. For more

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information, visit cyberaces.org .

About U.S. Cyber Challenge:

U.S. Cyber Challenge (USCC) is a program of the National Board of Information Security Examiners (NBISE), a 501(c)(3) organization, and has the mission to significantly reduce the shortage in the cyber workforce by serving as the premier program to identify, attract, recruit and place the next generation of cybersecurity professionals. USCC's goal is to find 10,000 of America's best and brightest to fill the ranks of cybersecurity professionals where their skills can be of the greatest value to the nation.

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