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**** MEDIA ADVISORY ****

U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, General Craig R. McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau and the National Guard Youth Foundation to Celebrate the Milestone of the 100,000th Cadet Graduating from the National Guard Youth Challenge Program

Featuring Cadet Tori Walston, Ambassador for the 100,000 graduates of the ChalleNGe Program

WHAT: The National Guard Youth Foundation, along with the Foundation's Honorary Co-Chair U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and General Craig R. McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau, invite you to join them as they commemorate the significant milestone of the 100,000th cadet graduating from the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program (NGYCP). A graduation ceremony and ChalleNGe Gala featuring cadet Tori Walston, Ambassador for the 100,000 graduates of the ChalleNGe Program, will be held in Shreveport and Baton Rouge, respectively.

The dropout crisis has reached epidemic proportions in our country, and has been particularly devastating in Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Even before the disaster, Louisiana experienced the second highest dropout rate in the nation. Currently, across the country, one in three high school students drop out. The 1.3 million dropouts in 2010 will cost the nation more than \$337 billion in lost wages over the course of their lifetimes. For every child recovered, our nation saves millions more in juvenile correction, welfare, and other public assistance programs. Ms. Walston, like many of her fellow cadets, dropped out of school at a young age and had few options. Through ChalleNGe, she has been given a second chance. Ms. Walston will graduate at the top of her class and plans to join the Air Guard and eventually go on to college.

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 22, 2011

Louisiana Youth ChalleNGe Graduation Ceremony

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Youth ChalleNGe Gala

Reception: 6 – 7 p.m.

Dinner: 7 – 9 p.m.

**Celebrity/media emcee, formal speaking program, live entertainment.*

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WHERE: Graduation Ceremony
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
705 Elvis Presley Ave. in Shreveport

Youth ChalleNGe Gala
Belle of Baton Rouge Hotel
102 France St. in Baton Rouge

WHO: **U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu**, Honorary Board Co-Chair, National Guard Youth Foundation
General Craig R. McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau
Cadet Tori Walston, Ambassador for the 100,000 graduates of the ChalleNGe Program
Gail Dady, President of the National Guard Youth Foundation Board of Directors



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About the National Guard Youth Foundation

The National Guard Youth Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to support the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program in its efforts to raise awareness of the growing high school dropout crisis in the nation and its impact on the economy and national security. The ChalleNGe Program is a 17-month voluntary program with a 5.5-month residential phase and 12-month mentoring phase. There are 33 program sites in 27 states and Puerto Rico. In 2009, 91 percent of graduates earned their high school diploma, general equivalency degree or returned to high school.

The National Guard Youth Foundation provides the ChalleNGe Program with scholarships, training and workforce transition assistance to graduates, while also increasing the visibility of the program and advocating for program goals. In cooperation with the ChalleNGe Program, the National Guard Youth Foundation assists youths who drop out of secondary school to improve their life skills, education and employability, creating the next generation of skilled workforce in America. For more information about the National Guard Youth Foundation, please visit www.ngyf.org.

To attend either event or schedule an interview, please contact:

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