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Big Isle's Loss Of 900 Will Be 'A Real Blow'

By WALT SOUTHWARD
Advertiser Big Island Bureau

HILO — The callup of Hawaii's National Guard and reserve forces will result in the loss of over 900 workers from an already tight labor situation on the Big Island.

Most employers here indicated yesterday they thought they could manage, though, for the duration of the callup period.

Chamber of Commerce President Arthur Herbst said "It'll be a real blow to the island. These people will be tough to replace.

"You just can't take 900 people out of the community without some effect. We have a tight labor situation as far as skilled workers are concerned. This sure won't help it."

Herbst, who is the local manager of C. Brewer & Co., said a quick check of the Brewer Plantations on this island indicated that they will lose about 90 people.

Lt. Col. Fred Koehn, commander of the Second Battalion of the 299th Infan-

try of the National Guard, said he thought the callup would have an effect on most categories of industry and business on the island.

"I was a little surprised when I heard it," he admitted. "I guess it was logical, but I really didn't anticipate that our unit would be called up."

Capt. Millard Sheets, commanding officer of Company B of the 100th Infantry of the reserve, was on a vacation camping trip and couldn't be reached for comment.

County Chairman Shunichi Kimura was ill and likewise unavailable for comment.

Comments from affected employers, and government division heads, included:

Robert Yamada, Yamada Transfer: "We have only six or seven men involved, but they're key employes. It will affect us quite a bit. It is hard to get skilled workers these days."

Police Chief Anthony Paul: "We're losing about seven men, and I'm not sure how it will affect our eligibility list. They're all patrolmen or lower. But it will have some effect."

Richard Devine, Hilo Meat Co.: "We're losing 6 out of 56 employes. A few are key personnel. It'll be rough, but if it has to be, it has to be."

Fire Chief James Hussey: "We have eight men involved, and they'll have to be replaced. But I don't think that it will be a really great problem for us."

County of Hawaii Civil Service Director Edward Silva:

"A fast count of County departments show that slightly over 40 of the 1,350 county employes are involved. We're going to have to take a long look at our regulations and see what we can do about replacing these men while they are gone."