



OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

2401 N. Lincoln Blvd. * Oklahoma City, OK 73152 * PH: 405.557.7100 * FAX: 405.525.0139 * www.oesc.state.ok.us

John Carpenter, Public Information Officer * 405.557.5469 * john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 13, 2003

**FORMER UNIFIRST EMPLOYEES ELIGIBLE FOR NAFTA
TRANSITIONAL READJUSTMENT BENEFITS**

NAFTA-TRA Provides Help for Unemployed Oklahomans Affected by Layoffs

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – All workers of Unifirst Corporation, Wilburton, Oklahoma who became totally or partially separated from employment on or after August 24, 2000 through two years from the date of certification are eligible for NAFTA-Transitional Readjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TRA).

The NAFTA-TRA program, a federally funded service of the U.S. Department of Labor, provides help to workers affected by job loss or a cut in hours and wages due to foreign competition. Workers may be eligible for training, job search and relocation allowances and other reemployment services. In addition, weekly cash benefits may be paid to eligible employees who are enrolled in approved training. The goal is to help laid off workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible. The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) administers this program in Oklahoma as an agent of the USDOL.

In order to qualify, former Unifirst workers must be enrolled in approved training within six weeks of certification or within 16 weeks of the most recent qualifying separation. If either of these requirements is met and the claimant is found to be qualified, that person will automatically be eligible for up to 26 additional weeks of benefits. The last day of the sixth week after certification is November 10, 2001. Separated employees who would like to take advantage of this assistance should contact their nearest Workforce Oklahoma Local Office at 1-888-840-WORK (9675).

###