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Department of Defense recognizes Tennessee employers for outstanding support

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. – Companies from across Tennessee and top Tennessee National Guard and Army Reserve officials met in Brentwood, Aug. 13, for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve’s Annual Planning and Awards Meeting. The awards ceremony recognizes nominated employers for their commitment supporting their Guard and Reserve employees.

Nashville-based HCA Healthcare accepted the prestigious Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for South Carolina’s Grand Strand Medical Center, which is owned and operated by HCA Healthcare.

The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of Guard and Reserve employees; only 15 companies across the nation receive this award each year. The award is given based on a nomination from a current Guard or Reserve employee or family member that works for the company.

“To be honored nationally as an organization which supports our colleagues’ military service is an accomplishment our whole community takes pride in,” said Mark Sims, chief executive officer at HCA Healthcare’s Grand Strand Medical Center. “We are honored that the same men and women who chose to volunteer to serve our country also choose to care for patients close to home. Their extraordinary service is a true testament to our mission; ‘Above all else, we are committed to the care and improvement of human life.’”

“Every state nominates employers, small and large,” said Amanda McMahan, volunteer support technician for the Tennessee ESGR. “In total, 3,382 nominations came in from across the country as well as the protectorates and HCA Healthcare’s Grand Strand Medical Center was one of 15 recipients.”

Tennessee’s Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, and Department of Veteran Services Commissioner, Maj. Gen. Tommy H. Baker, joined Ronald E. Bogle, National Chair of ESGR, Jim Mungenast, ESGR State Chair, Army Reserve Brig. Gen. Robert T. Krumm, and Air National Guard Col. Jason Brock at the ceremony honoring selected outstanding employers.

Gov. Bill Lee recorded a congratulatory video, which was played during the ceremony, thanking the employers for their continued support of Tennessee’s military members. Holmes presented a proclamation from Lee, designating the week of Aug. 15-21 as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve week in Tennessee.



In addition to this year's Freedom Award winner, the ESGR also recognized past Freedom Award recipients from Tennessee to include Cracker Barrel Old Country Store (2019), Dunlap Police Department (2018), Shofner Vision Center (2014), St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (2014), Eastman Chemical (2013), Steel Plate Fabricators (2013), iostudio (2012), Tennessee Valley Authority (2012), Dollar General (2010), Franklin's Printing (2010), Lochinivar Corporation (2008), and the State of Tennessee (2007). Also recognized were top Tennessee Freedom Award Semi-Finalists; Autozone, Boston Government Services, Department of Energy Consolidated Service Center, Hendersonville Police Department, and Tomahawk Strategic Solutions.

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Nashville-based HCA Healthcare is presented the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, Aug. 13, at the Annual Planning and Award Meeting, in Brentwood. HCA-owned Grand Strand Medical Center, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is one of 15 employers that won the award for their outstanding support of the Guard and Reserve. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mathieu Perry)

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