June 29, 2016

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD RECIPIENTS NAMED

15 Exceptional Employers Recognized for Top Honor

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today the 15 recipients of the 2016 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest honor the department gives to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve employees.

"These 15 employers have distinguished themselves through their outstanding support of our Guard and Reserve members and their families," said Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "Without the unfaltering support of employers like them, the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve would not be able to fulfill their vital roles in our National Security Strategy. It is a great honor for me to recognize these employers, and I congratulate them on their receipt of the Employer Support Freedom Award."

The 2016 Freedom Award recipients below will be honored at a ceremony in the Pentagon Aug. 26:

Employer	Location	Nominator's Branch of Service
Alaska Airlines	Anchorage, AK	Air Force Reserve
Albuquerque Police Department	Albuquerque, NM	Air National Guard
Benjamin Franklin Plumbing	Springfield, MO	Navy Reserve
Burford Corporation	Maysville, OK	Army National Guard
Carolinas Healthcare System	Charlotte, NC	Air National Guard
Clackamas County Sheriff's Office	Oregon City, OR	Army National Guard
Delmarva Veteran Builders	Salisbury, MD	Air Force Reserve
FASTSIGNS International, Inc.	Carrollton, TX	Air Force Reserve
Hope Valley Industries	North Kingstown, RI	Air National Guard
Idaho State Police	Meridian, ID	Army Reserve / Army National Guard
Lowe's	Mooresville, NC	Navy Reserve
Maryland State Police	Pikesville, MD	Army Reserve
Prairie Grove Consolidated School District 46	Crystal Lake, IL	Marine Corps Reserve
Seattle Fire Department	Seattle, WA	Navy Reserve
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company	Akron, OH	Navy Reserve

The 2016 recipients were selected from 2,424 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists. The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 220 employers have been honored with the award.

For more information on the 2016 Freedom Award program, contact Maj. S.J. Brown at (571) 372-0692 or visit www.freedomaward.mil. For more information on ESGR, visit www.esgr.mil.