



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY OF ATHENS RECOGNIZED AS A PATRIOTIC EMPLOYER

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – May 20, 2021 – City Manager C. Seth Sumner has accepted an award from the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) on behalf of the Friendly City. Donald N. Edmands, Jr. from the Tennessee Committee for ESGR delivered the plaque as well as letters of support and appreciation for the City's employer practices that allow employees time to serve their country. Mr. Edmands noted that he is "thankful for employers like the City of Athens for allowing employees to serve in the defense of our nation."

The award came as a nomination from Staff Sergeant Joel Church, of the 253rd Military Police Company, 117th Military Police Battalion, who was activated and deployed for nearly a year. Apart from serving his nation, Mr. Church serves his local community as a Heavy Equipment Operator with the Athens Public Works' Sanitation Division. The City made certain that his position remained available upon his return once released from active duty in compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

City Manager C. Seth Sumner stated, "I accept this award on behalf of the City of Athens, who has always held our military heroes in the highest regard. We are proud of Joel's service and we fully support all of our National Guardsmen and veterans from all branches. This award is a high honor for the Friendly City."