

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COMMISSIONERS RECEIVE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AWARD

COLUMBUS—Franklin County has once again been honored for its commitment to military employees and their families.

The Franklin County Office on Aging, an agency of the Board of Commissioners, has been awarded the Ohio Employer Supported Guard and Reserve's (ESGR) *Chairman's Above and Beyond Award*, intended to honor outstanding employers who have gone above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) for the past year.

"Supporting our employees, especially those who serve in the Armed Forces, as well as their families, continues to be a high priority for Commissioners," said John O'Grady, President of the Board of Commissioners.

In 2006, Franklin County Commissioners reaffirmed their commitment to a County policy which provides County employees called to active military duty with continued payment of wages, uninterrupted health and life insurance benefits, and seniority for time spent in active duty including receipt of any pay raises the employee would receive if they were in active employment status.

A year later, in 2007, Commissioners established an Active Duty Employee Benefit which allows employees under the appointing authority of the Board of Commissioners, and who are called to Active Duty in the National Guard or Military Reserves for one year or more, to be eligible for a benefit equaling five hundred dollars per child.

As a result, in 2007, Franklin County Commissioners were named a 5-Star Employer by the Ohio ESGR.

Commissioner Paula Brooks has also been a champion for the nation's military service members and veterans. As an alumni 3-star civilian advisor on the federal Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), advising U.S. Secretary of Defense on troop readiness and military families Commissioner Brooks said, "My ancestors fought in the American Revolution, and my dad in World War II. Military families need our support when their loved ones deploy. As a Commissioner in 2006 we recognized the necessity to make this support available to Franklin County employees serving our nation. I am proud of our continuing relationship with the ESGR."

The Ohio ESGR annually recognizes those individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service to our nation's defense through continuing support of our National Guard and Reserve Service Members and their Employers at the ESGR Annual Awards & Recognition Dinner.

Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown accepted the award on behalf of the County during this year's dinner held on Saturday, May 18 at the Columbus Marriott Northwest in Dublin.

"We are happy to accept this award, although, it is really the women and men who serve this country that deserve the honor," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "We honor and thank them for their service to our Country and our county."

On behalf of ESGR, state chair John Hoppers stated: "Ohio has the best employers in the country, and Central Ohio leads the state. Franklin County is another sterling example of how we care for those who protect freedom around the world."

Franklin County's award is on display on the 26th Floor of the Franklin County Government Tower located at 373 S. High Street.

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About ESGR: ESGR, a Department of Defense organization, develops and promotes employer support for Guard and Reserve service by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of applicable laws, and resolving conflict between employers and service members.

For more information on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, log on to: www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners.