



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2014

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Department of Defense Announces Shofner Vision Center as 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award Recipient
Tennessee Employer Among Fifteen to Receive Nation's Highest Honor for Supporting Guard and Reserve Employees

WASHINGTON – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense office, announced today that Shofner Vision Center of Nashville, Tennessee, is one of 15 recipients of the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the Department's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees. This year's recipients were selected from 2,864 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists for going far beyond what the federal law requires to support their military employees. Tennessee was the only state in the nation this year to receive two of these awards. In addition to Shofner, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis was also recognized.

"I'm honored to announce the recipients of the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award," said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel. "Guardsmen and Reservists across the nation rely on strong bonds with their civilian employers. By recognizing these 15 exceptional employers, the Department of Defense celebrates the contributions made by American employers to our Citizen Warriors. I commend these extraordinary employers for their unwavering commitment to service members and their families."

Shofner Vision Center was nominated by Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Kevin Johnson from the 10th Aeromedical Squadron at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He highlighted the company's ongoing communication during his deployment and publicly recognizing his military achievements. Shofner Vision Center created the United Military Support (UMS) program to challenge local businesses to jointly fund community non-profit organizations that aid military members. The company also offers free eye surgeries to injured service members and significant discounts to all military customers.

The 2014 Freedom Award recipients below will be honored at a ceremony in the Pentagon Sept. 26:

Employer

Arizona Public Service
AT&T
Capital One
CH2M-WG Idaho
General Mills, Inc.
J.G. Management Systems, Inc.
Los Angeles Fire Department
N.H. Department of Environmental Services
PNC Bank
Shofner Vision Center
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Location

Phoenix, Arizona
Dallas, Texas
McLean, Virginia
Idaho Falls, Idaho
Golden Valley, Minnesota
Grand Junction, Colorado
Los Angeles, California
Concord, New Hampshire
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania
Nashville, Tennessee
Memphis, Tennessee

Triumph Pharmaceuticals Inc.
UNC Health Care
Washoe County School District
Zions Bank

St. Louis, Missouri
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Reno, Nevada
Salt Lake City, Utah

For more information about the Freedom Award and this year's recipients, visit www.FreedomAward.mil under the Media Tab in the Press Releases section.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 190 employers have been honored with the award. To learn more about ESGR, visit www.ESGR.mil.

For questions or interviews regarding the Freedom Award, contact Beth Sherman, ESGR Public Affairs, at OSD.ESGR-PA@mail.mil or by phone at 571-372-0705.

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