



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR TIM BURCHETT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Burchett seeks to make Knox Co. first ‘Purple Heart County’ in Tennessee

Knoxville, Tenn. — Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett has asked the Knox County Commission to proclaim Knox County a “Purple Heart County” at the board’s July meeting. If approved, Knox would be the first county in Tennessee to be designated a “Purple Heart County.”

“This nation was built on the shoulders of the men and women in our Armed Forces, and we owe our freedom and everything that is good in this country to their willingness to fight on our behalf,” said Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett. “Many of our veterans were called away to war, and too many of them were injured or never returned. If approved, this designation will be yet another way that Knox County shows support for those who take up arms in defense of our great country.”

The “Purple Heart County” designation is part of a nationwide effort spearheaded by the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Once the proclamation is approved, Knoxville Chapter #356 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart will present a plaque and flag formally designating Knox County as a “Purple Heart County.”

“As a representative of both the Tennessee and Knoxville Military Order of the Purple Heart, it is our pleasure to make Knox County the first Purple Heart County in Tennessee,” said Maj. Arthur McGinley, Senior Vice Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Tennessee. “This designation is an opportunity to thank Knox County Government, the Knox County Commission, and especially Mayor Burchett, for their support of our combat wounded veterans.”

Since taking office, Mayor Burchett has worked hard to support veterans by increasing staffing in our Veterans Service Office, moving the office to an ADA accessible location and supporting the office’s outreach efforts throughout the county. He also recently, with Commission approval, implemented a Human Resource veterans preference policy in the hiring process that guarantees an interview to any veteran who meets the minimum requirements for an open position. Mayor Burchett has worked closely with the Medal of Honor Convention, which is coming to Knox County next year, and the POW/MIA flag now flies over several County facilities, including Engineering & Public Works, Purchasing and four Knox County Senior Centers.

Three Knox County Commissioners – Richard Briggs, Dave Wright and Jeff Ownby – have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, as have several County employees, including Veterans Service Officer Robert “Buzz” Buswell – himself a Purple Heart recipient.

The Purple Heart is a combat decoration awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces wounded in combat. The medal is also awarded posthumously to the next of kin when a servicemember dies of combat wounds.

More information about the Military Order of Purple Heart can be found at <http://www.purpleheart.org>.

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