



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2011

CONTACT: Beth Sherman
703-696-1171, ext. 539
ESGR-PA@osd.mil

**DoD Announces Finalists for
2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award**
30 Employers Recognized for Outstanding Support of Guard and Reserve Employees

ARLINGTON, Va. – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, announced 30 employers are finalists for the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the DoD's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. The 30 finalists were selected from 4,049 nominations received earlier this year from Guard and Reserve service members or their families.

A board selected the finalists from the group of 148 semifinalists announced last month. Employers named as finalists for the Freedom Award stand out for the formal and informal initiatives they put in place for Guard and Reserve employees and their families. Finalists' supportive measures include accommodating Guard and Reserve members' military responsibilities, making up the difference in military and civilian pay during deployments, continuation of benefits, sending care packages and providing personal support to the families of employees called away from home.

"Our Nation's employers have provided a high level of ongoing support for their military employees and their families even in the tough economic climate of recent years. These 30 finalists have gone to extraordinary lengths to create a supportive culture within their workplaces allowing our citizen warriors to serve with the confidence that they are most appreciated and that their families are being cared for at home," said ESGR National Chair James G. Rebholz. "Being selected as a finalist is a tremendous achievement and honor that all of us should recognize and applaud."

A national selection board comprised of senior DoD officials, business leaders and prior awardees will select 15 recipients for the 2011 Freedom Award. The DoD is expected to announce the award recipients in early summer. The 2011 recipients will be honored in Washington, D.C. at the 16th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award Ceremony on September 22, 2011. Since 1996, only 145 companies have been presented with the Freedom Award.

The finalists for the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award are:

| Employer | Location |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 3M Company | St. Paul, Minn. |
| Ameren Missouri | St. Louis, Mo. |
| Amica Mutual Insurance Co. | Lincoln, R.I. |
| Auburn University | Auburn, Ala. |
| Basin Electric Power Company | Bismarck, N.D. |
| Burt County Sheriff's Office | Tekamah, Neb. |
| Chesterfield County Police Department | Chesterfield, Va. |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Creform | Greer, S.C. |
| CSX Transportation | Jacksonville, Fla. |
| Electrical Contractors Inc. | Omaha, Neb. |
| Ford Motor Company | Dearborn, Mich. |
| GCI | Anchorage, Alaska |
| Hanson Professional Services Inc. | Springfield, Ill. |
| Integrity Applications Incorporated | Chantilly, Va. |
| Kadrmass, Lee & Jackson | Bismarck, N.D. |
| Kent County Levy Court | Dover, Del. |
| Key Risk Management Services | Greensboro, N.C. |
| Martin/Martin Consulting Engineers | Lakewood, Colo. |
| Orange County Sheriff's Department | Santa Ana, Calif. |
| Principal Financial Group | Des Moines, Iowa |
| PRTM Management Consultants | Washington, D.C. |
| Qwest Communications, now CenturyLink | Monroe, La. |
| Santa Fe Police Department | Santa Fe, N.M. |
| St. John's Lutheran Church | Yankton, S.D. |
| State Correctional Institute, Waymart | Waymart, Pa. |
| State Employees' Credit Union | Raleigh, N.C. |
| Szaferman, Lakind, Blumstein and Blader, P.C. | Lawrenceville, N.J. |
| Town of Gilbert | Gilbert, Ariz. |
| Wells Fargo & Company | San Francisco, Calif. |
| Western Systems and Fabrication | Spokane Valley, Wash. |

About ESGR and the Freedom Award:

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. ESGR was established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.

For questions or interviews regarding the Freedom Award, please visit www.FreedomAward.mil or contact Beth Sherman, ESGR Public Affairs, at 703-696-1171, ext. 539 or by email at ESGR-PA@osd.mil.

###