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NEWS RELEASE

2020 Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) Awards Announced

*Elected City Official of the Year – Mayor Dave Hatter, City of Fort Wright
City Employee of the Year – Jeremy Creason, Fire Chief, City of Mayfield
City Government of the Year – City of Shelbyville*

(LEXINGTON, Ky.) - The Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) has announced its annual awards for Elected City Official of the Year, the City Employee of the Year and the City Government of the Year. For 2020, there were more than 50 awards nominations.

“Part of our KLC mission is to support innovation and quality governance,” said J.D. Chaney, KLC Executive Director/CEO. “The annual awards program shines a light on the great work that officials and employees are doing in our Kentucky cities.”

Chaney said this year, with COVID-19, cities and city officials have taken the lead in keeping communities safe, assisting businesses and continuing to provide services during this historic time. He said, “This year fully demonstrates the importance of cities in our daily lives.”

The award winners, selected by an independent panel of judges, will be recognized this week during the annual KLC virtual Conference & Expo. KLC will also make formal presentations locally to all winners in their home cities in coming weeks.

The Elected City Official of the Year Award recognizes a dynamic official who demonstrates outstanding leadership and innovation. KLC represents more than 370 cities and nearly 2,500 elected city officials. The winner this year is **Fort Wright Mayor David “Dave” Hatter**.

KLC will make a local presentation to Mayor Hatter during the October 7, 6:00 p.m. (EST) City Council meeting at Fort Wright City Hall, 409 Kyles Lane, Fort Wright, KY.

“There were many outstanding elected officials from across the great Commonwealth of Kentucky nominated for this award, and it is a great honor just to be a nominated,” said Mayor Hatter. “While I’m humbled to receive the 2020 award, if I am successful in my role as Mayor, it is only because of the City’s amazing professional staff and our very dedicated and devoted City Council members who set the policies and budget that staff and I implement.

We have an unparalleled team that cares deeply about our community and I am fortunate to serve with Councilmembers Adam Feinauer, Jay Weber, Margie Kreke Witt, David Abeln, Scott Wall and Bernie Wessels. They deserve the bulk of the credit for making Fort Wright a great place to live, work, own a business, and play!”

David Hatter has been a professional technologist for over 25 years with emphasis and experience in software development and cybersecurity. He has also served eight terms on the Fort Wright City Council and is now in his second term as mayor. Through the years, he has earned the reputation as a consensus builder and has earned the confidence and support of residents, business leaders, co-workers, and other elected officials inside and outside of the city limits. He is committed to continuing the work of the previous mayors and councilmembers by keeping taxes low, maintaining the city's debt-free status and ensuring that the City of Fort Wright is both business and family-friendly.

Mayor Hatter was nominated by the entire Fort Wright City Council and the city administrator. The nomination states that the mayor believes in leading by example and holds himself to the highest of standards and transparency. He is very involved in the operational success of the City. He launched the City's social media pages and is a leader in cybersecurity impacting all levels of government. He has been a key supporter of the growth and development of the Fort Wright Police and Fire Departments and been a long-term proponent for pension reform. He was a strong proponent and local voice on the separation of the CERS system from the KRS system.

The City currently spends in excess of \$500,000 annually on infrastructure projects and was successful in obtaining a \$2 million federal grant to re-align and rebuild a major corridor. The mayor also initiated a sidewalk program and a tree maintenance and removal effort and takes interest in all levels of operations. He has initiated enhanced overall community communication with direct emails to residents; encouraged community programs such as clean up Fort Wright efforts, local anti-identity theft shred events, Fire/EMS blood drives, women's self-defense classes, safe school trainings, and the implementation of temporary zoning changes to assist restaurants and businesses in the ever changing COVID pandemic, helping to make sure that they can remain open and operational during the difficult economic challenges.

Mayor Hatter encourages the constant re-evaluation of processes and policies for city improvements and business practices to ensure efficiency in operations. He seeks input from local elected officials, staff, residents, and other professionals. He leads decisively but always works to involve others. While integrity and ethical practices are his focus, he wants to provide essential and necessary high-quality services at the lowest cost feasible to the public. He recognizes the significance of leading during controversial and non-controversial times, and isn't afraid to speak out on matters of importance nor does he shy away from difficult discussions.

Mayor Hatter is a nationally published free-lance writer, adjunct instructor at Cincinnati State College, and prominent local cybersecurity news and radio personality. He is a devout husband, father of four, and strong community activist and volunteer. His nomination read in part, "His kindness, passion, dedication, hard work and candidness naturally drives individuals to like and trust him. Mayor Hatter truly leads by example...."

The award is sponsored by Adams, Stepner, Woltermann & Dusing, PLLC, which provides a \$1,000 donation to the charity of Mayor Hatter's choice.

The City Employee of the Year Award brings recognition to an exceptional city employee who performs at a distinguished level to improve his or her local government and community. KLC is proud to represent more than 20,000 municipal employees. The 2020 City Employee of the Year is **Mayfield Fire Chief Jeremy Creason**. *KLC will make a local presentation to Chief Creason during the*

November 9 6:00 p.m. (CST) City Council meeting at Mayfield City Hall, 211 E. Broadway, Mayfield, KY.

“It is an honor for me to work with Chief Creason and to witness his leadership within our community, region, and on a state level,” said Mayfield Mayor Kathy O’Nan. “The investment he makes in our community will have a positive impact that will last many years, and the city will be better by having him in his vital leadership roles. I am most proud to have him as the head of the Mayfield Fire Department.”

Chief Creason joined the Mayfield Fire Department (MFD) in 2008 as a firefighter/paramedic with the MFD and quickly rose through the ranks to become chief at the age of 34. His quick path to leadership in the city’s outstanding department helped prepare him to become a leader for turbulent times. Creason is city’s leading voice in all COVID-related health matters within the community. Due to a COVID-related hiring freeze, he led an understaffed department and during this time, due to the diligence of his department in their precautions, there were no positive cases within MFD personnel. When PPE was scarce, the chief found it for his employees, and it was Chief Creason that the head of every city department looked to for guidance on safety precautions for their staff. In January 2019, at his suggestion, the city had merged the Codes Department with the MFD, and in April, it was Chief Creason who met with local businesses and churches to advise them on the capacity seating in their buildings and the regulations for their reopening.

The Mayfield Fire Department provides fire protection within the Mayfield city limits and ambulance service to the entirety of Graves County. He works with both the City Council and Fiscal Court as they plan their services and budgets – a skill that takes considerable political finesse. A consummate professional, he is a Level II Paramedic Instructor and a Level I Firefighter Instructor, yet he is a leader who welcomes small children to tour his fire stations with as much enthusiasm as he welcomes dignitaries.

Jackson Purchase Medical Center CEO David Anderson said, “Whenever there is a potential threat to the health and safety of this community, Chief Creason reaches out to all the key stakeholders to prevent, mitigate and manage any potential harm....”

Still under 40, Creason is respected in his home city, regionally and on the state level. He has received a number of professional and community awards including the Award of Excellence in Pediatric Emergency Care by the Kentucky Emergency Medical Services for Children Program and he was one of only 22 EMS providers within the Commonwealth to be named a 2019 Recognition Winner by the American Heart Association. He is a loving, devoted, Christian father and husband who is always the first to volunteer to coach, lead, and mentor the youth, and is a lifelong resident of Mayfield. Mayor O’Nan said, “His heart for his hometown beats strong.”

The award is sponsored by the law firm of Freeman, Mathis & Gary, LLP, which will provide a \$1,000 donation in honor of Chief Creason.

The KLC City Government of the Year Award recognizes a city that has done something transformational. **The City of Shelbyville** received the honor for its transformational “five in one” \$9 million downtown redevelopment strategy. *KLC will make a local presentation to the City Council on October 20, 6:00 p.m. (EST) at Stargazer Plaza, 612 Main St., Shelbyville, KY.*

“It is humbling for the City of Shelbyville to be named as Kentucky’s ‘City Government of the Year’ by the Kentucky League of Cities,” said Shelbyville Mayor David Eaton. “This recognition speaks well of

the hard work and joint efforts of the Shelbyville City Council, city employees, ShelbyKy Tourism, and Shelby Main Street. These accomplishments are the result of all parties working together in the best interest of our community. Their forward-thinking commitments to our citizens bode well for the future of our great city.”

The City of Shelbyville’s downtown area experienced two major negative events over the last decade. A large business closed, leaving blighted, unsalvageable structures and in 2013, a devastating fire destroyed three historic buildings on Main Street. These holes visually tarnished the downtown area and hurt the community economically. Nevertheless, the Shelbyville City Council looked upon these circumstances as an opportunity to invest in and promote downtown redevelopment and growth. Shelbyville ambitiously undertook five major projects simultaneously, all of which were purposed to promote, enhance, and interconnect downtown. Through a strategic and highly inclusive process, the City worked with large and local businesses, investors, the chamber of commerce, the tourism office, county government, Shelby Main Street, the historical society, local community groups and committees, and many others to bring back its downtown.

The first project was the creation of a new 48-spot parking lot on donated land one block from the heart of downtown restaurants and businesses. Project two replaces the site on Main Street destroyed by fire in 2013. The Stargazer Plaza outdoor venue represents a \$1.5 million investment that provides opportunities for concerts, receptions, parties, and general gatherings downtown. Project three is a sculpture art walk through the downtown district providing public art in the city’s business center. Project four is the new Shelbyville Conference and Welcome Center, now under construction, which represents another \$6.5 million investment. This collaborative effort with Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC), will bring thousands of people downtown for conferences, weddings, meetings, and other events. Project five, in conjunction with the Conference and Welcome Center, is the \$1 million Seventh Street Corridor Renovation Project. New sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping will frame the northern entrance to Shelbyville’s historic downtown and will create a warm, inviting landmark linking all five projects. The projects are already attracting new businesses and private enterprise.

City leaders are confident that the investments will be returned several-fold, particularly for tourism. The City has worked hard to brand itself as a destination as the Saddlebred Horse Capital of the World, with many other attractions. With the “five-in-one” effort, new marketplaces are opening, business expansions are in the works and tourism opportunities are broadening. The City is keeping the community informed of progress through social media, which has kept people engaged and excited. Combining these five projects into one vision shows Shelbyville has, and will continue to lay the foundations necessary for current and future generations to enjoy their city.

The award is sponsored by Collins & Company, Inc., which will provide a \$1,000 donation toward a city project.

“It’s our privilege to serve those that serve,” said Chaney. “Our winners are exceptional examples of why cities are so important to the residents they serve and to the commonwealth overall.”

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