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NEWS RELEASE

2019 Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) Awards Announced

*Elected City Official of the Year - Mayor Jude Hehman, City of Fort Mitchell
City Employee of the Year - Josh Bray, City Administrator, City of Mount Vernon
City Government of the Year - City of Madisonville*

(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 innovative city programs and projects. The winners, selected by an independent panel of judges, will be recognized on September 25 during the annual KLC Conference & Expo in Covington, Kentucky. 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 Mitchell Mayor Jude Hehman**.

Mayor Hehman received a total of 10 separate nominations for the Elected City Official of the Year Award, from private citizens, community leaders, employees and fellow mayors. All carried through on themes of his ability to lead by bringing people together, his visionary and action-driven approach to what is possible in his city and his commitment to stewardship and transparent government. Elected as his city's youngest-ever council member at the age of 21, Mayor Hehman learned his community inside and out. Years later, he was elected mayor, taking office in 2015, and is an example of someone who truly balances his family life, professional life and public service. One of his first actions as mayor was to rebuild his city team with enthusiastic professionals. Mayor Hehman solves problems by listening to all constituents and by taking a big picture approach, whether it be his commitment to children's issues, parks and recreations, community events, partnering with other local entities on planning or working with other area governments on emergency services. He's the first onsite for community events, he shovels snow or picks up trash when it's needed and brings "can do" leadership to his city. He is constantly visible but gives others the credit for the city's local improvements, success and growth. Mayor Hehman has established himself as one of northern Kentucky's most respected and charismatic leaders, helping to take the region well into the future. A local small business owner's nomination stated, "Fort Mitchell is extremely lucky to have him."

The award is sponsored by Adams, Stepner, Woltermann & Dusing, PLLC, which provides a

\$1,000 donation to the charity of Mayor Hehman'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 2019 City Employee of the Year is **Mount Vernon City Administrator Josh Bray**.

Josh Bray started with the City of Mount Vernon as its tax administrator while he was a student at Eastern Kentucky University. After graduation, the mayor and city offered him the opportunity to stay on and created a city administrator position for him in 2008. Since then, both he and his city have flourished. Bray's list of accomplishments is long, including restructuring many business functions and services within the city, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars and creating opportunities for business development and revenue. Beyond the fiscal accomplishments, Bray envisions opportunities for his city and makes them happen by what Mayor Michael Bryant calls "practical creativity." Bray oversaw the city's acquisition of Lake Linville Marina and Campground, now one of the area's primary tourism destinations. He designed the new city department from the ground up and put his heart and soul into every aspect of its development, including working in the bait shop and dock on weekends to get it off the ground. No job is too small. Conversely, he's stepped in when asked to advocate on big issues, including testifying on behalf of his city and all cities with KLC on ABC issues. Bray has made many things possible for his city. He worked to get a \$1.165 million water improvement grant, he collaborated with the fiscal court and the industrial authority to recruit an employer that will soon bring 200 plus jobs. He worked through the complex process to make an area off Interstate 75 a TIF district, which is estimated to have a \$120 million economic impact on the city over the next 20 years. His ability to reach across lines and work in many areas to get things done has made him a valued asset not only in his city, but in his region. Bray was nominated for the City Employee of the Year Award by Mount Vernon's mayor, city attorney, the Rockcastle County Judge/Executive, the county attorney and the executive director of the industrial authority.

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

The KLC City Government of the Year Award recognizes a city that has done something transformational and our recipient certainly demonstrates a city making efforts to bring the community together.

The City of Madisonville received the honor for its intentional work in the area of community engagement, place building and local pride. Mayor Kevin Cotton, who took office in January, has a vision to break down barriers to create a unified system of support that "will elevate every business, home and every person." First and foremost, Cotton said the city functions as a team. When every employee and official tries, good things happen. With quality of life as the goal, the City of Madisonville capitalized on its existing assets such as its outstanding parks and recreation system, to create a series of special events to bring people together. The city enhanced the existing summer Friday Night Live sessions with a series of acts that would appeal to everyone. The city also launched a program to honor local active duty and veteran

men and women during the first ever Hometown Heroes Campaign. With the campaign, the city honored 52 local heroes with street banners, and concluded it with a free concert, attended by more than 5,000 people. The mayor's philosophy and the city's efforts to engage, build up and celebrate its constituents are a running theme. Mayor Cotton said, "We continuously look for opportunities to bring our community together. The struggles we find in local government are real, but it's important that we're looking at everyone in our community to bring their own strengths to Madisonville, and in turn, we want everyone to benefit from what our city can offer, now and in the future."

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

"Our awards recognize the great work that officials and employees are doing in our Kentucky cities," said Jonathan Steiner, KLC executive director/CEO. "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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