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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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City of El Paso Named 2023 Great American Defense Community

Collaboration Aims to Assist Veterans

El Paso, Texas— The City of El Paso, home to Fort Bliss' 1st Armored Division, is one of only five communities across the nation selected as a 2023 Great American Defense Communities.

In collaboration with the Endeavors, the City of El Paso highlighted the work that is being done to provide a high quality of life to Veterans in our community.

The [Association of Defense Communities](#) (ADC) announced the five selected communities in conjunction with USAA, the program's official sponsor at the Defense Communities National Summit this month.

The 2023 Great American Defense winners are as follows:

- **El Paso, Texas**
- Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska
- Fort George G. Meade Region, Maryland
- Montgomery-River Region, Alabama
- Greater Omaha, Nebraska

"It is an honor that the City of El Paso has been recognized as a 2023 Great American Defense Community," said City Manager Tommy Gonzalez. "The City of El Paso and Fort Bliss have grown together through daily interaction since the establishment of Fort Bliss in 1854. The City of El Paso is Fort Bliss and Fort Bliss is El Paso as seen by the more than 57% of the military assigned to Fort Bliss who live in the El Paso community with their families. They shop in our stores, play in our parks, benefit from our services, and their children attend our schools. They are El Pasoans. El Paso has always answered the call to serve as seen by the more than 50,000 veterans that reside in our community. The City of El Paso will continue to support our service members and veterans through deeds, not words. We will provide safe neighborhoods, employment, education, economic opportunities, and a high quality of life and place that all service members and veterans deserve."

Communities are chosen through a competitive nomination process based on integration, support, and collaboration with installations and community-building efforts, such as educational and employment opportunities. This year, the Great American Defense Communities Program has a special focus on innovation, workforce development, education, entrepreneurship, and supporting young service members.

City has focused its efforts on increasing its support of the military and veteran community by developing a variety of initiatives in honor of our heroes. In addition to hiring a Chief Military Officer, the City has developed the following:

- **Veteran Resources Website:** The informative website, hosted by the City, provides valuable information in a centralized location to help veterans and their families find resources and services.
- **Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee:** This committee was formed to serve as a source of information related to the status, resources and services available within the El Paso community to the City's large veteran population.
- **Sun City Bliss:** A video program to promote valuable services to our veterans, active military, and their families, the City of El Paso which airs on the City and Fort Bliss' social media platforms, E-newsletters and City TV.
- **Annual Veterans Luncheon:** Knowing that veterans are living and working all around us, the City of El Paso hosts an annual Veterans Day Luncheon for its more than 700 employees who are proud veterans.

—more—



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Among All Members of the Community

Media contact: Soraya Ayub Palacios
Strategic Communications Office
(915) 212-1040 or (915) 781-4386



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- **Veteran Employment Incentive:** In 2015, City Council approved an economic development incentive policy which includes a bonus rebate (property or sales tax) for companies that actively employ veterans and establish a formal veteran hiring program.
- **The Bridge Fellowship:** The Bridge is a fellowship launched by the City of El Paso in partnership with Fort Bliss to help military service members transition into successful post-military careers.

In collaboration with the City of El Paso, Endeavors, a non profit organization, established a multitude of services to address the needs of the Military and Veteran community. Endeavors' mission is to provide comprehensive, effective, and innovative services that encourage growth and empower people to build their lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. Since 2017, Endeavors served over 2,900 Service Members, Veterans, National Guardsmen, Reservists, and their families in El Paso with the below services:

- Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors, El Paso
- The Endeavors Veteran Wellness Center in El Paso
- Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families
- Suicide Prevention
- El Paso Veterans Housing Program
- Community Impact

The Great American Defense Communities program was launched by ADC in 2016 to recognize and celebrate the communities and regions that support military installations for their exceptional commitment to improving the lives of service members, veterans, and their families.

About ADC

ADC is the connection point for leaders from communities, states, the military, and industry on community-military issues and installation management to enhance knowledge, information sharing, and best practices. With nearly 300 communities, states, regions, and affiliated industry organizations as members, ADC represents every major defense community and state in the country. Visit DefenseCommunities.org to learn more. For more information visit, EIPasoTexas.gov and click on the Veterans tab.

[2023 Great American Defense Communities](#)

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