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WEST VALLEY REGION HONORED AS GREAT AMERICAN DEFENSE COMMUNITY

Glendale, Ariz. – The Association of Defense Communities (ADC) has named the West Valley region a “Great American Defense Community.” The designation recognized eight communities throughout the nation that have provided outstanding support to service members, military families and veterans.

The West Valley is home to Luke Air Force Base and about 100,000 active-duty military and civilian personnel deployed or working at the base, their families, and veterans dependent on important base resources and services. “This award is a testimony to just how vital it is that we continue to support our military installations and military personnel,” said Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers. “On behalf of the Council and the citizens of Glendale we are so proud to be the home to Luke Air Force Base.”

ADC launched the [Great American Defense Communities Program](#) in 2016 to acknowledge the unique contributions cities, counties and regions that host installations make to improve quality of life for service members, veterans and their families. Communities are selected by a panel of defense community advocates and experts from dozens of nominees based on the broad range of efforts they carry out on behalf of military personnel and their families, covering areas such as education, job opportunities, housing, family support during deployments and community appreciation.

The West Valley Partners coalition, comprised of Glendale, Maricopa County and 12 other West Valley communities, submitted the nomination on behalf of the West Valley region. The nomination highlighted a diverse collection of efforts throughout the region, touching on key areas of community building and integration, support and collaboration, educational and employment opportunities, and family support including efforts from government, nonprofit, and education organizations within our community.

“It has taken the partnerships and the outpouring of support provided by Glendale and all of our neighboring cities to help insure the success of our military and the critical mission of Luke AFB,” said Weiers.

The nomination was supported by US Representatives Trent Franks and Ruben Gallego, who provided letters of endorsement as part of the nomination package sent to the ADC Selection Committee.

“Both Luke and the surrounding community have long placed an emphasis on partnership and collaboration. These efforts go back decades and have helped to ensure that the base and the surrounding community have thrived and grown together, realizing mutually beneficial successes that will secure Luke’s

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role within our region and our national defense for years to come,” said Jenna Goad, Glendale Intergovernmental Programs and Council Services Manager and primary coordinator for the West Valley Partners coalition.

“What makes our region truly unique is the way in which collaboration with Luke is integrated into our community at every level, from local elected officials and staff to our residents, business leaders, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions. Our region is fortunate to have leaders who recognize the importance of supporting Luke and take strategic steps to advocate for Luke’s future,” said Goad.

The West Valley Partners coalition includes elected officials from Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Gila Bend, Glendale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Maricopa County, Peoria, Phoenix, Surprise, Tolleson, Wickenburg and Youngtown. The group’s primary focus is advocating for the critical missions at Luke Air Force Base and supporting the work of the United States Air Force.

The partnership was also instrumental in securing Luke as the training home for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, estimated to bring 3000 military, civilian, and contractor jobs and more than \$125 million in associated construction to the West Valley at full build out.

The West Valley Partner communities will be presented with the official designation at a ceremony in June during the ADC Annual Summit in Washington, D.C.

Other communities recognized as “Great American Defense Community” award recipients include the Alamo – San Antonio Region, TX; the Charleston Region, SC; Christian County, KY; the Fort Hood – Central Texas Region; Hampton Roads, VA; Sierra Vista, AZ ; and the Governments of Southeastern Connecticut.

“All eight in the 2017 class of honorees truly embody the ideals this initiative was designed to celebrate — making host communities for our nation’s military installations ‘Great Places to Call Home,’” said ADC President Mike Cooper.

ADC is the nation’s leading association representing communities and states with a significant military presence and their partner organizations. It unites the diverse interests of communities, states, the private sector and the military on issues such as protecting defense infrastructure, community-military partnership, defense real estate, mission growth, base redevelopment and support for military families and veterans.

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