



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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Mayor Jacobs Selects Joseph Mack to Run Parks-Recreation Department

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— After an extensive search and interview process, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs has picked Navy veteran and parks and recreation professional Joseph “Joe” Mack to lead the Knox County Parks and Recreation Department.

Mack, whose first day as the new senior director will be July 6, is tasked with managing the department’s \$5.6 million budget, 51 full-time employees, and 43 part-time workers.

“I’m extremely excited to join the Knox County team,” Mack said. “I look forward to meeting the recreational needs of the citizens of Knox County while also making Knox County and its beautiful natural resources a destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts from around the world.”

The county’s parks and recreation system features more than 50 parks that encompass 2,700 acres; 11 miles of greenway; and 29 miles of trails. In addition, the system includes three splash pads, four dog parks, one beach, three golf courses, and numerous recreation fields.

Knox County conducted a far-reaching search that stretched across the southeast, northeast, and Midwest regions to fill the position, which has remained vacant since October 2020. The Human Resources Department and the Mayor’s Office interviewed 12 candidates during the first round. The Mayor’s Chief Operating Officer, Dwight Van de Vate, then interviewed six candidates from the pool before whittling it down to two. From there the COO and the Mayor met personally with the final candidates before selecting Mack.

“Joseph Mack is an innovative director with a track record of reinvigorating programs,” said Mayor Jacobs. “He brings a fresh, out-of-the-box perspective, and he’s a recognized leader who specializes in team building and training. We couldn’t ask for more and I’m excited that he’s joining us.”

Mack, who served in the Navy for 30 years before retiring as a Master Chief Petty Officer, worked as the director of the City of Covington’s Parks and Recreation Department since July 2016. There, he managed a \$2 million budget, 30 full-time and part-time employees, a 20,000-square-foot facility, more than 200 acres of parkland, 13 sports fields, a year-round Aquatic Center, and a Museum.

He established the non-profit Covington Parks Foundation – which is similar to the Legacy Parks Foundation – to help pay for park system projects. He also implemented a highly successful

Adopt-A-Park program that resulted in improved community relations and service opportunities for local businesses and civic organizations.

In addition, Mack entered into a provider agreement that brought Lacrosse to the area. He also reinvigorated a sagging youth sports program – adding flag football, soccer and basketball leagues. He also implemented a 5K – Road to Glory series – which built relationships with local churches; added Outdoor Fitness Equipment to four sites at no cost to the local taxpayers; added a 12-obstacle confidence course and won a \$242,000 grant and built a bicycle park and playground on 83 acres of unused park property.

Mack earned a degree in management from the American Military University and a degree in administration-management studies from Excelsior College. He has been married to his wife for 20 years and together the couple have six children.

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