



NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Statement of City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The City of Murfreesboro Police Department and the Rutherford County Sheriff’s Office will partner with federal, state, and other local law enforcement agencies to ensure the constitutional rights and safety of citizens at an event, Saturday, October 28 in downtown Murfreesboro.

The League of the South has filed an application with both the City and County to hold a rally between 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the Public Square. The League of the South is expected to be joined by affiliated groups. Other individuals and groups are expected as counter protestors.

“Teams of officers will safeguard the area,” Sheriff Mike Fitzhugh and Murfreesboro Police Interim Chief Michael Bowen said in a joint statement. “We ask everyone to maintain lawful behavior.”

While the views of the League of the South are not from this community and do not represent those of the City and County, the First Amendment provides a right to free speech and a right to peaceably assemble, and, thus, neither the City nor the County can legally prohibit the event. The City and County, however, have carefully planned various measures to preserve and promote public safety, before, during, and after the event.

Some in our community might feel compelled to witness the demonstrations, but in the interest of reducing tension and avoiding conflicts, the City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County government strongly encourage community members to avoid the Public Square Oct. 28.

As the sixth fastest-growing mid-sized community in the nation and home to MTSU, the largest undergraduate university in Tennessee, the City and County are proud of the community we are building and the diversity of its residents.

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“The City, County, and its partners are committed to both the Constitution and public safety,” Fitzhugh and Bowen said. “Be assured, officers will take every step necessary to protect both. The slightest indication of disruption or violence will initiate immediate law enforcement action to uphold the rights of citizens and ensure their safety.”

For safety reasons, officers will close the downtown Square to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic at 3 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 28.

Counterdemonstrators will be permitted to enter Public Square via South Church Street and South Maple Street only. Officers will search everyone in the vicinity of the rally site. No weapons or masks will be permitted in the vicinity of the rally. A list of prohibited items will be released in advance of the event.

Drivers must remove their cars from the Public Square and from all streets within a one-block radius of Public Square by 3 a.m. Saturday, or the cars will be towed. The street closures within this one-block radius include

- College Street between North Walnut and North Spring Street.
- East and West Main Street between Walnut Street and Spring Street.
- Vine Street between South Walnut Street and South Spring Street.
- Walnut Street between West College Street and West Vine Street.
- Maple Street between West College Street and West Vine Street.
- Church Street between East College Street and East Vine Street.
- Spring Street between East College Street and East Vine Street.
- West Tommy Martin Drive between Vine Street and N.W. Broad Street.

“We understand the temporary street closures will inconvenience our residents and visitors,” Fitzhugh and Bowen said. “We ask you to pre-plan alternate routes, expect some traffic delays and be patient.”

Law enforcement officers coordinated with fire, medical, emergency management and public works agencies in planning for Saturday’s event.

FOR MEDIA ONLY:

A media staging area will be established at the Rutherford County Clerk’s Office Building at 319 N. Maple St. in Murfreesboro, one block from the downtown square.

The parking lot will be designated for media only on Oct. 28. Those covering the event should have valid photo identification identifying them with their media affiliation/organization and sign a media roster.