



CITY OF ANNISTON, ALABAMA

MAYOR
Ciara Smith

CITY COUNCIL
Lewis Downing - Ward 1
D.D. Roberts - Ward 2
Joe Harrington - Ward 3
Millie Harris - Ward 4

CITY MANAGER
Skyler Bass

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ANNISTON APPOINTS KENNETH FREE CITY MANAGER

ANNISTON, AL - At the October 7, 2025 meeting, the Anniston City Council voted 4-0, with one abstention, to appoint **Kenneth Free as Anniston's next city manager**. The Anniston native was selected following a competitive interview process involving three finalists.

Free brings a distinguished record of leadership in both military and federal service. A retired U.S. Army officer and Bronze Star recipient, he served 20 years in uniform, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Following his military career, Free held senior roles with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he served as Alabama's state director and later as deputy regional administrator for the Southeast.

Throughout his career, Free has emphasized accountability, measurable performance, and what he describes as "leading from the front." He shared during the interview process that his priorities for Anniston will focus on expanding access to quality affordable housing, attracting young professionals, and pursuing federal funding opportunities that can drive local economic growth.

"When I think of affordable housing, it should be quality—something I'd be proud for my own family to live in," Free said. "Returning home to Anniston gives me the chance to bring my experiences from across the world back to the community that raised me."

Mayor Ciara Smith voiced her support for the council's decision. "Mr. Free demonstrated a clear vision for Anniston's future and a deep understanding of how to strengthen our community," said Smith. "His leadership experience and commitment to public service make him well-suited to guide our city. I am eager to work with him as we continue building a strong, united team dedicated to progress."

Free will officially assume his duties once contract negotiations are finalized.



