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For Immediate Release

Utah National Guard's 23rd Army Band Change of Command

DRAPER, Utah – The Utah National Guard's 23rd Army Band will conduct a change-of-command ceremony Friday, July 3, at 7 p.m. at Brigham Young Memorial Park in downtown Salt Lake City.

At the ceremony, Chief Warrant Officer Mike Cottam will officially relinquish command to Chief Warrant Officer Denny Saunders.

Cottam, of Saratoga Springs, has commanded the Band since 1998 and has been a member of the unit since 1966.

Before retiring from his civilian employment, he was an educator and trainer with Alpine School District. During his career he was honored with the U.S. Department of Education recognition for outstanding achievement in drug and alcohol education, the Alpine Excellence in Teaching award and the Utah State PTA Friend of Children award. In 2006 he received the prestigious Utah National Guard Minuteman Award for four decades of outstanding military service to his country.

Saunders, of Kearns, has been a member of the Utah National Guard since 1992. He joined the 23rd Army Band as a trumpet player in 1993 and most recently served as the Band's executive officer.

In his civilian employment, Saunders is a full-time band teacher at South Hills Middle School in Riverton. He will assume command of 52 Soldiers.

Following the change of command, the Band will perform a concert at Brigham Young Historic Park.

Media Notes: Brigham Young Historic Park is located on the southeast corner of State Street and North Temple in Salt Lake City. For more information, please contact Lt. Col. Hank McIntire at (801) 420-4778.