



TOWN OF ARCHER LODGE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Archer Lodge and Congressman Brad Knott Honor 2026 Little League Softball World Series Championship Team; Team Presents Town with a World Series Jersey

ARCHER LODGE, NC – At the October 5, 2026, meeting of the Archer Lodge Town Council, the Town Council honored the 2026 Little League Softball World Series Championship Team from Johnston County Little League (JCLL). The team advanced through the World Series with victories over teams representing Canada, Texas, and Florida before defeating Florida once again 4-0 in the semifinal to earn a place in the World Series Championship Game. They then beat Kentucky 2-0 in the 2026 Little League Softball World Series Championship Game on August 9, 2026.

Through determination, teamwork, sportsmanship, and an extraordinary commitment to excellence, the JCLL 12U Softball Team captured the hearts of millions and the World Series title, earning the distinction of being the best 12U Little League softball team in the world.

The Town Council of Archer Lodge unanimously passed the resolution and presented copies to the team as a lasting expression of the pride and appreciation of the citizens of Archer Lodge and Johnston County for their historic achievement.

Congressman Brad Knott (who serves NC's 13th Congressional District, which includes Johnston County) also attended the meeting to add his congratulations. He said, "Ladies, let me just tell you – this is the highlight of my week." He added, "When I got the blurb about the run that this team was on, there was just a quiet movement in our office about cheering you on, supporting you, and just celebrating the path that right here in Archer Lodge you blazed, not just for this community but for the whole country."

He added, "And if there's one thing that I really lament... is when young people don't believe they can do excellent work. Yes, it takes top to bottom effort from, again, everybody in this room, coaches, parents, and so forth. But when those ingredients come together, occasionally it just

clicks, and it makes a lasting impact. And that's what we see with you all."

Congressman Knott congratulated the players efforts as a team. He said, "You all showed grit; you showed determination; you all had to get along with one another, which people in Washington can learn from you. You all pushed through adversity. You all acted with extreme, just high-level integrity, courteousness. You know, your manners never, never wavered. I heard nothing but rave reviews about your sportsmanship, how you surrounded each other with encouragement."

He stated, "Not many people are world champions... you will probably be world champions again, [but] I've never been world champion of anything. So, savor that title. Relish it." Congressman Knott then presented the team and Coach Ben Catarozzoli with a U.S. flag flown over the Capitol "in commemoration for all of the great work that you did in August of this year. So, thank you so much."

JCLL President Ronnie Correia then came forward and said, "Mayor and Council – I've never been more excited to come in here in front of y'all and say, 'I told you so.'" He added, "We knew ...[this team] was going to be special...I think that they lived up to the hype." Ronnie then related how the team has been on a whirlwind media tour since winning the Little League World Series in August. "They deserve very accolade and every recognition that they've gotten. The coaches deserve every bit of accolade and recognition that they get. The parents especially, y'all don't realize how much the parents had to invest in [and sacrifice] this summer."

Ronnie then stated, "On behalf of Johnson County Little League, I do want to thank all of you for supporting us through the whole thing." The team then presented the Town with a team jersey from the Little League Softball World Series. "It is jersey number 23 – that's the year that we started softball. And I think it's appropriate to be the number that we give of a jersey that we'd love to see you put up wherever you want to put it up," said Ronnie Correia.

Mayor Matt Mulhollem accepted the jersey and said, "Ladies, it's an honor, and we will gladly show this off in town hall for many, many years to come. Thank you very much."

Mayor Pro Tem Clyde Castleberry stated there were a lot of teams that had really great players but this group of players always played as a team, "and that made me feel good...You winning [the World Series] was one of my life highlights, I can promise you."

Mayor Matt Mulhollem stated, "I was fortunate to make some of those World Series games in Greenville and what I remember the most is your smiles...There was some awesome, excellent play, but when some plays didn't go quite your way, you all still had your smiles and you rallied around each other. It was the biggest sports story, bar none, in all of Johnston County history and absolutely for Archer Lodge. And we can't congratulate you enough. We are extremely proud of you."

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Photos and resolution attached.