

COMMUNITY CORNER

Efforts toward energy conservation help sustain our installation

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

About a year ago we really started stressing sustainability and energy savings here at Fort Riley. When the Fort Riley Campaign Plan rolled out at the beginning of the year, sustainability was one of the lines of effort included in the plan. A few months later we received the Installation Management Command's campaign plan. It also listed sustainability as one of the lines of effort, proving we were headed on the right track.

As stated in the IMCOM plan, "We will operate in a manner that ensures we perform both today's and tomorrow's missions to standard. We will manage resources, conserve and secure energy, operate, and build future capabilities to achieve the Army's Triple Bottom Line of Mission, Community and Environment. We will integrate the application of sustainability principles into daily operations

in much the same way that safety has become an integral part of day-to-day activities. It is essential that we assume a 'sustainability mindset' in all aspects of our operations."

At Fort Riley, we are well on our way to meeting those goals. Just as we are working to sustain our human resources, we are also working toward sustaining our installation and its resources. Besides just being a good idea as good stewards of the earth, developing our energy independence makes good sense from a force protection standpoint. If our energy resources are our own, they become harder targets for terrorism.

Many programs at Fort Riley have been helping us accomplish these goals. Last year we saved almost \$2 million with our energy conservation efforts.



Col. Brown

The Directorate of Logistics, has been supporting our efforts with its fleet of hybrid vehicles. DOL also heads up the vanpooling program on Fort Riley along with VPSI, Inc. Each day, more than 100 employees vanpool to work reducing energy consumption, reducing traffic congestion and parking problems while saving themselves thousands of dollars a year in gas and maintenance on their personal vehicles. Imagine what kind of impact it will make as the number of participants increases.

In our on-post housing areas, residents have been taking part in the Department of Defense Resident Responsibility Utility Program. The program monitors resident utility usage and compares it to the usage in similar homes. Those homes that use more than the baseline set each month receive a bill for the extra usage. Those residents who are under the baseline receive a rebate.

This program encourages residents to think about their

energy consumption. Instead of leaving every light in the house on, residents now know the best choice is to only use lights where they are needed. Some other things residents can do to decrease their energy use include using the microwave to cook small meals; turning the water off while shaving or brushing teeth; taking short showers instead of baths; keeping drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool; and washing only full loads of laundry or using the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine. These all are small actions we can take to help make a big difference.

While our planners on post are looking into the bigger picture of how we can become an energy independent post and model for the Army, each of us can make a difference every day. By being conscientious of our actions, we can help. Each time we unplug our cell phone chargers that aren't being used, or

turn off our computer monitors at the end of the day, it knocks a little bit off of the post's energy bill.

Another way we can help save energy and money is by replacing traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Because of their extended life and reduced energy use, they yield significant savings.

Making sure windows and doors stay closed during the winter months is another way to reduce energy costs. In older homes, where doors and windows may not seal as tightly as we'd like, homeowners can purchase window film at hardware stores to help seal in heat.

On post, all new construction has to be 30 percent more efficient than the national standard. By 2012, all federal buildings must have meters that will allow individuals to monitor and control systems such as heating and cooling. The meters also will allow the systems to adjust themselves by raising or

lowering the temperature when the buildings are unoccupied. Homeowners can accomplish this as well by installing programmable thermostats in their homes. These can be set to adjust the temperature when no one is home and kick back in before you plan to return so your home is comfortable when you get there.

October is Energy Awareness Month, and I encourage everyone to use this opportunity to take a look at their actions each day. Every little bit helps and when we all work together we can accomplish our goals. To learn more about saving energy at work and at home, visit www.energy.gov. And, keep an eye on the newspaper during October for more stories about how Fort Riley is putting energy savings to work.

If you would like to comment on this column or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, e-mail rlc.post.newspaper@comus.army.mil.

FRFD partners with community to teach kids about fire safety

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Parents, do you know where your lighters and matches are? Ask your children – they do.

To address the issues of youth fire setters, SafeKids Geary County, Junction City Fire Department and Fort Riley Fire Department have started a free Y-Fire Program.

This program is aimed at children, ages 10 to 17 years old, who are starting fires and have aroused concern in their families or communities.

"We want to help kids understand the consequences of their actions and help them change," said Richard Ross, retired fire marshal and one of the developers of the program. "Kids are my passion, and I want to see them succeed, not get hurt because they didn't know what playing with fire would do."

"It's an organization which develops and supports a wide range of intervention, communication and training for service providers of fire involving youth," said Shawn Sullivan, lead inspector with the Fort Riley Fire Department. "The goal is to prevent damage, injury and death caused by child-set fires."

The next program will be at 9 a.m. Oct. 2 at the Junction City Health Department.

Local community members are assisting with the program. Local firefighters will address how fires start and how they spread. The county attorney's office will address what the legal ramifications are for the Family.

A corrections officer will discuss what it is like to live in the juvenile detention center.

Burn information will be given by a nurse, and a burn survivor will talk about how burn impact.

The FRFD is acting in an

advisory role to help the Junction City program get off the ground and running, Sullivan said.

"We will assist them with setting up and running any classes that the Junction City Fire Department is not able to cover," he said.

Department members Tina Knowles, Scott Melcher, Russell Stewart and Sullivan are assisting with the program.

The program is one day only, will last about four hours and will provide lunch to those in attendance. A parent is required to attend the program with each child.

One of the things that surprised Melody Saxton, SafeKids coordinator, was the cost to the Families.

"We learned that parents pay a huge fine when their child is sent to juvenile detention and then have to pay child support

BACK TO SCHOOL



Shandi Dix | POST

Lindsay Krier, kindergarten teacher, right, helps Alessa Casey, second grader, left, during a Scavenger Hunt in which students had to find each teacher or staff member with his or her favorite book at Fort Riley Elementary School's Back to School Barbecue Sept. 16. Students also had to match teachers and staff with their childhood photos which were displayed on a bulletin board. The event concluded with a barbecue hosted by the FRE Parent Teacher Association.

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