

COMMUNITY CORNER

Census data key for area fund distribution

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

In my mail a few days ago was a letter from the Census Bureau. It was a reminder that I would soon be seeing another piece of mail containing my 2010 Census form. The letter encouraged me to complete and return my census form, which I will do.

If you live in on-post housing, or live off post, you may have received a similar letter, and you should soon receive your census form. The census is conducted every 10 years as stipulated by the U.S. Constitution. It should only take about 10 minutes for most households to complete, and the results could have a significant effect on the Central Flint Hills Region.

Here are a few important things to remember about the census if you're a Soldier or Family member. First, the census is a count of where people are on April 1, 2010. You shouldn't be counted at your home of record, unless you are living there on April 1. If a Soldier is deployed on Census Day, he or she will be counted by the Defense Manpower Data Center as being overseas, so don't include them on your form. But, anyone

living in your home on April 1 should be recorded as living there, even if they are not related to you.

If you live in barracks on Fort Riley,

you won't get a census form. But, you will be included in the count as a resident of group living quarters such as dormitories and barracks. That aspect of the count is being coordinated by the Directorate of Human Resources.

If you receive a census form and don't return it to the Census Bureau, you're likely to get a postcard reminding you to fill it out. Expect a knock on your door from a census worker if you still don't respond.

Why fill out and return the census form? Census data are used to distribute federal and state funding for transportation projects, community development projects and directing funds for various government services. Businesses use census data to make decisions on where to place new stores, factories, distribution centers and other facilities. The number and



Col. Brown

distribution of seats in the House of Representatives also is determined by census data. So, census data are important to many people, agencies and businesses.

Transportation is a growing issue in the Central Flint Hills Region. Since the Base Realignment and Closure decision in 2005, the region has seen an influx of more than 9,000 Soldiers, along with their Families. When "NBAF" – the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility – is completed in Manhattan, it will employ approximately 450 federal workers, and private-sector jobs associated with the NBAF could bring many more people to the area. Census data, and projections made from them, will be vital in ensuring the region receives adequate federal and state funding for its transportation infrastructure.

As Craig Phillips, from our Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, said in a previous article on the census, businesses also use the data in their decision processes to determine where they will place restaurants and stores. Their business plans usually require a certain population level, meeting various demographic criteria such as age and gender,

in an area before they build a store or restaurant. The census is the primary source of those data.

We also want to ensure the interests of the Central Flint Hills Region are well represented in Topeka and in Washington, D.C. Census data are the primary means of determining the distribution of the districts in the Kansas and the U.S. House of Representatives. If everyone fills out the census forms, we'll have an accurate accounting of the region's population, and the correct number of representatives.

Hopefully, you can see how important it is that you be counted in the 2010 Census. Isn't taking a few minutes to answer 10 questions worth all the potential benefits of more new businesses, improved transportation systems and our Constitutional right to representation in our government?

For me, that's an easy question to answer. I'll be filling out my Census form, and I encourage you to fill out yours.

If you would like to comment on this Community Corner or suggest a topic for a future column, e-mail me, post: newspaper@conus.army.mil.

USO Fort Riley seeks volunteers for center

USO

USO Fort Riley is seeking volunteers for its new center, which is set to open spring 2010. The center will be open year-round.

"The USO is a positive environment that depends on the support of dedicated volunteers," said April Blackmon, center director. "As a nonprofit organization with just two employees, volunteers are what will keep this center running."

Spouses, veterans and retirees, community members and organizations are welcome to the USO team, as well as Families, students and servicemembers.

"Family-friendly volunteer opportunities are available that will enable parents to share the experience and importance of service with their children," said Jackie Eary-Badrawi, programs

manager. "High school students also may volunteer with their parents to help toward their educational community service requirements. Any active duty servicemembers who volunteers in their spare time can work toward the Volunteer Service Medal and promotion points."

All shifts are available. The center, which will be located in Building 6918 on Custer Hill along with the Arts and Crafts Center and Information, Ticketing and Registration, will be open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday; and noon to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.

For more information about becoming a volunteer at the center or with any USO Fort Riley program, contact Eary-Badrawi at 785-320-1167 or jearybadrawi@uso.org.

Training for Red Cross moves to the Internet

By DeKeya Greer
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The American Red Cross is going digital, and traditional methods of training for the American Red Cross have been switched up. Instead of getting training in a classroom with person-to-person contact, participants can learn online.

"People will be able to learn CPR, rescue breathing, how to care for choking emergencies, first aid care – for bleeding, burns, sudden illnesses and injuries – from your personal computer," said Debra Tucker, American Red Cross regional marketing director.

The online courses are merged courses that combine first aid with CPR/AED and adult, child and infant courses into one.

The online learning is a two-part course. The first part is the online course at your leisure while the second half requires participants to

attend training with a Red Cross instructor.

The American Red Cross also offers babysitting, and CPR/AED for children, adult and infants and first aid courses to Fort Riley personnel.

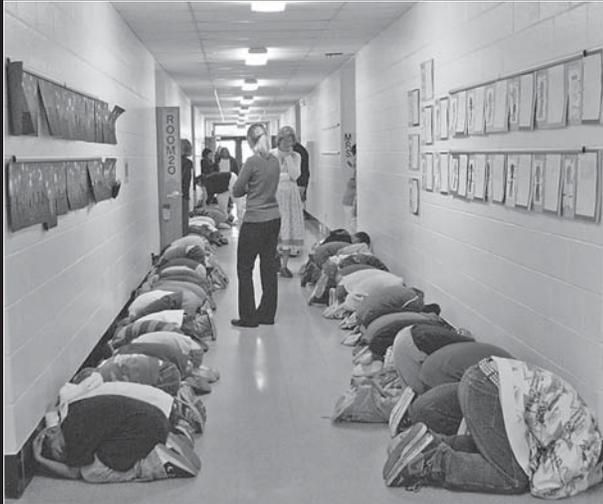
The age requirement for first aid and CPR/AED is 12; and ages 11-15 are eligible for the babysitting class.

Various trainings take place including videos, skills practice and group discussions.

"The American Red Cross' mission is to provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. These courses provide just that – the training to help them prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies," Tucker said.

For more information on the online classes or to get a schedule, visit www.thinkred.org or contact Pam Overby at 785-537-2180 or by e-mail at overbyp@usa.redcross.org.

DUCK AND COVER



Shandi Dix | POST

Jefferson Elementary School students hunker down and cover their heads in the school hallways March 11 during the statewide tornado drill. The drill is practiced as a safety precaution in case of a real tornado. The drill teaches kids not to panic and what to do in the event of a tornado, said Vern Steffens, principal. If a tornado actually hits post, students may be moved to the gymnasium where there are no windows or glass, Steffens said. Gov. Mark Parkinson declared the week of March 8-12 as Severe Weather Awareness Week during which the Kansas Division of Emergency Management in coordination with the National Weather Service, Kansas Highway Patrol and Kansas Emergency Management Association conducted a statewide tornado drill. The original date for the drill was March 9 but was moved to March 11 due to the possibility of severe storms actually occurring on March 9.

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