

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

## BRAC causes Fort Riley, local community to grow, change for better

By Col. Kevin Brown  
GARRISON COMMANDER

As you may have read in the column on the front page of today's newspaper from Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, Installations Management commanding general, the Army has undergone a great amount of change in the last 10 years, and Fort Riley has certainly undergone a lot of change as well.

Base Realignment and Closure, a process that most recently took place in 2005 and enables the Army to reshape its infrastructure to support its forces, had a profound impact on our post, its Soldiers, Families, civilians and those in the local community.

Perhaps the biggest change was the return of the 1st Infantry Division in 2006, replacing the 24th Infantry Division. Prior to the division's return, Fort Riley had about 9,500 Soldiers assigned to the post. By the end of Fiscal Year 2013, we will have nearly 18,000 Soldiers. Fort Riley has grown from a post with two brigades and a National Guard augmentation to a post with five brigades.

So what does this all mean?

It means we've grown from a post with an installation-related population, which includes Soldiers, Family members, civilian employees and retirees, of 30,000 to one with a total population of about 55,000.

It means Family members in the local area have grown from 12,700 in 2005 to 24,500; civilian employees have grown from 5,800 in 2005 to 8,350.

All of these changes impact those outside of our gates as well in the form of jobs, contracts, retail sales and more. In 2005, our estimated economic impact was \$938 million. In 2010, it was \$2.23 billion.

For each Soldier and civilian at Fort Riley, it is estimated the net public benefit – the estimated revenue from all forms of taxes – is about \$1,000 per year per Family in the community. The net public benefit from Soldiers and civilian employees



Col. Brown

in 2010 is estimated at more than \$9 million.

Because of the number of additional Families projected to return to Fort Riley and the surrounding communities, the net public benefit from the Soldiers and civilians is likely to increase to more than \$10.5 million and will truly be a contributor to the surrounding communities.

Therefore, Fort Riley – and the local community – largely benefited from BRAC.

We grew, while gaining units and Soldiers, whereas other installations and locations did not.

By 2012, Fort Riley is expected to have the most Soldiers that have been at Fort Riley since at least 1994. You'll often hear this referred to as Homecoming 2012, when all five brigades will be stateside at once.

With this growth comes challenges – the increase of personnel from all five of the brigades in the 1st Inf. Div. also means a sharp increase in the use of services across the installation.

So what are some of these challenges?

#### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

To begin, we are working to plan for the increase in traffic concerns and mitigate traffic congestion. At this time, Fort Riley is conducting tests at Ogden and Trooper gates to ease access on and off post.

In addition, the 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley have teamed with our partners at the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency to provide a public transportation alternative that meets the growing needs of an expanding population.

Called "The Fort Riley Shuttle," this effort, funded at a 100 percent share by the Kansas Department of Transportation using federal and state grant dollars, aims to be a viable alternative for commuting to and from the post.

Investment in transportation yields benefits for the economy by generating up to \$4 for every \$1 invested, provides a means to reduce Family fuel and car maintenance costs, and helps to improve air quality for the Central Flint Hills Region both today and in the future.

#### HOUSING

While two-thirds of our Soldiers live in civilian communities outside the gates, the need for on-post housing as Homecoming 2012 approaches is acute.

To remedy that need, Fort Riley gained approval to permanently retain 313 homes in lieu of demolition, bringing the end-state number of homes at Fort Riley to 3,827. An additional 137 homes also were approved for retention on a temporary basis until the target end-state is met.

However, while for the moment there are about 5,800 Soldiers living in the seven counties comprising the CFHR, those numbers will increase sharply with Homecoming 2012. The need for affordable right-sized housing off-post remains key for Soldiers of the pay grade E-4 and below. For the time being, off-post housing in the correct size and price range within the housing market area remains an area of concern.

#### EDUCATION

Fort Riley has begun construction on a new \$26

million elementary school in the Camp Forsyth neighborhood, thanks to a partnership between Picerne Military Housing and Geary County Schools Unified School District 475. As is the case with our existing schools – five elementary schools and one middle school – this new school will be under the administration of USD 475.

Long-range funding for the replacement and renovation of older school buildings is ongoing. Growth at Fort Riley has resulted in overcrowding at all on-post schools. Five of six on-post schools are more than 50 years old, projected to be rated in poor/Q4 condition in the near future.

Our success in implementing BRAC changes and managing the growth BRAC brought to Fort Riley would not be possible without the unwavering support from our CFHR neighbors and partners.

The concert of our efforts allows us to remain true to the 1st Inf. Div. motto:

*Duty First, Service Always!*

## Soldiers start 'Fitness Frenzy' for local students

Spc. Iaunzia Downey, 1st Maint. Co., 541st CSSB, third from right, adds a running cadence into the rotation between stations.

2nd Lt. Joshua Smith  
541ST CSSB



By 2nd Lt. Joshua Smith  
541ST CSSB PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Officers, noncommissioned officers and Soldiers with the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, 1st Infantry Division provided support and assistance to Paxico Middle School and Junior High School while participating in a Fitness Frenzy in early June.

Planned and executed by eighth-grade students with the assistance of Cleion Morton, school principal, and her staff, the 541st CSSB Soldiers pro-

vided leadership and motivation throughout the day.

Soldiers participated in a variety of activities like tug-of-war, Twister and Dance Dance Revolution in addition to jumping rope, sporting obstacle courses and rounds of Simon Says. Soldiers also integrated stories with each exercise with the goal to express the importance of fitness.

Throughout the day, service members connected with the students while enjoying the opportunity to share their experiences in the Army and as a member of the "Pace-

ter" Family. Soldiers also had the opportunity to integrate military marching and cadences while moving between stations with the students.

At the conclusion of the event, Capt. Antonio Jackson, 1st Sgt. Bde, conducted a nutritional brief aimed to increase student awareness on nutritional habits.

The event allowed Soldiers and students of Paxico Middle and Junior High schools to meet their Fitness Frenzy goals and share a day together.

## JCHS students travel to DC for national forensics competition

By Shandi Dix  
1ST INF. DIV. POST

JUNCTION CITY – Five Junction City High School students qualified for the National Forensics competition May 26 to May 30 in Washington.

Among those students qualifying were 2010-2011 school year sophomore Sean Smith, who competed in debate with the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and junior Kristen Graham, who competed with an oral interpretation of literature comprised of "Santa's Twin" and "Mean Tens."

The students said they were excited about their trip to the nation's capital.

"I'm really ecstatic, mainly because it's more competition,

that's the main thing I love, but it's also in Washington, D.C.," Smith said.

He described the trip as "going to be crazy" because he's only been in small Kansas and Texas towns like Junction City.

For Graham, this was her second time to the capital.

Both students said they joined forensics to meet other people.

"Personally, it's fun, period. All of the people are just awesome," Smith said. "Secondly, I love the fact that I can go somewhere and have a logical argument with someone about something that doesn't really matter. Thirdly, just the people we meet because there are a lot of interesting people that do forensics, and there's a lot of peo-

ple out there."

"I like the people," Graham said. "What I do is so much based on how the judge perceives you and how other people interact with your piece, that I like talking to other people who get to do the same thing, too."

Graham also joined the forensics team, she said, because of national competition tapes their coach, Cathy Rankin, would show during freshman communications class.

"They were the best-of-the-best, and they were awesome, so I was like 'I think I want to try that' and I am actually pretty decent at it as it turns out," Graham said.

This was the second year for both students to compete in forensics.

Being involved in forensics has allowed Smith to be more social, he said.

"Before forensics, I was just kind of a gaming nerd, I just kind of stayed in my house all day long, but now that I have forensics, I've kind of stepped away from that. I'm actually talking to people less on the mic and more in person, which I think the main benefit of it is, I can make friends easier," he said.

For other students, it's a way of dealing with emotional times, Graham said.

"More than half of our class is military, and when their dads get deployed, they are typically really sad, but for the (oral interpretation) kids, they take that and kind of use it to do better in their pieces, especially when it's

like dramatic, and they are sad about a parent or something," Graham said. "They're able to put that emotion behind it because they have that real aspect."

In preparation for competition, students spend time practicing.

For the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Smith and junior Justin Ballard spend time after school researching and writing blocks and cases.

For her combined piece, Graham spent time performing for her father.

"Even though I'm not here to practice with Ms. Rankin that often, my dad likes Pat McManus who wrote 'Mean Tens,' so he makes me do it in front of him a lot," she said.

Smith and Graham's coach

shared the students' excitement for the national competition.

"I am so excited for them. When the kids found out that they could go to Washington, D.C., they were even more motivated," she said. "I have been coaching for six years, and four out of the six years, I've taken students to nationals, but it's always been one or two. When they found out Washington, D.C., they really worked hard, and up until the end, we had a really good chance for up to 10 students going."

Seniors Candace Cooper and MaryBeth Carter also qualified for nationals in Public Forum Debate, a team debate on current events.