

COMMUNITY CORNER

Post tax center offers free services to Soldiers, Family members, retirees

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

Many of our Soldiers may have noticed W-2s are now available in at www.mypay.gov, or you may have received it in the mail. If you have not, all W-2s should be available by Jan. 31.

So what does that mean? It means it's that time of year again – tax season.

Often filing taxes can seem like a daunting and tedious task, but I want to let you know it doesn't have to be. Thanks to the Installation Management Command and our tax professionals with the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Fort Riley has a tax center manned annually to help our Soldiers, Family members and retirees – anyone with a valid military ID – file their taxes. And the best part, the Fort Riley Tax Center provides these services free of charge.

This year, the tax center will open Jan. 19 in Building 7034, at the corner of Normandy and Bullard streets on Custer Hill.

If you are thinking of

forgoing the Tax Center in favor of quick cash from a refund-anticipation loan, don't.

The tax center can electronically file your refund. Electronic filing and direct deposits drastically reduces the time it takes to get your refund. On average, filers see their refunds in less than a week.

Instant rebates offered by most commercial tax services are nothing more than loans with incredibly high interest rates. In fact, in 2006, the Department of Defense published a regulation protecting Soldiers from these expensive refund anticipation loans. In addition to increased disclosure requirements, fee-based tax preparation companies may not charge in excess of 36 percent interest for these loans.

If you prepare your taxes, bring them into the tax center. One of the certified tax preparers will check over your state and federal returns to make sure you've got it



Col. Clark

correct. If the IRS questions your taxes, the tax center can provide help.

The tax center is just one more service provided at Fort Riley to help ease the burden on Soldiers and Family members.

I encourage you to file early. Beat the rush. Gather your documents now, so that by next week, you are ready to have your taxes prepared.

Please, read the article that begins on the front page of the newspaper this week. It details exactly what services the tax center can assist you with and what you need to bring to an appointment with a tax counselor.

Open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, the center operates mainly on appointments, but walk-ins also are welcome. Saturdays are walk-ins only. To make an appointment, call 785-240-1040.

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

HOUSE FILL AD

K-State Research and Extension agent teaches children nutrition

By Melony Gabbert
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The following is the second of four profiles created to highlight the agents with K-State Research and Extension at Fort Riley. KSRE offers a Military Life Skills Program, which is comprised of programs to enhance each participant's ability to handle many aspects of everyday life.

For more information, visit Building 7285 on Normandy Drive or call 785-239-9991. More information also can be found at www.fortriley.ksu.edu or visit www.facebook.com/KSREFortRiley.

JANAE SVOBODA

Janae Svoboda received her bachelor's degree in dietetics. She then worked for K-State Research and Extension in Beloit, Kan., before working for a similar program in Nebraska. In May, Svoboda took the opportunity to return to Kansas and work for the K-State Research and Extension office at Fort Riley.

"I enjoy the diversity among the military population, and though I enjoy working with all age groups, I find that my work with youth in the elementary schools the most rewarding," Svoboda said.

In line with her interest, Svoboda's focus is to provide programming to all of the elementary schools on post, concentrating her efforts on first- and fourth-grade classrooms using the nutrition curriculum, "Book in a Bag" and "Professor Popcorn."

First-graders receive visits from Svoboda once a month during the school year. Fourth-grade teachers request Svoboda's program, which she then teaches once a week for five weeks.

"Both sets of lessons include fun learning activities and hands-on food experiences in which students get to enjoy and make their own healthy snack that coincides with the lesson topic for the day," Svoboda said.

Svoboda also said it is fun to create lessons for children

because they are so accepting about healthy eating, they get excited and are impressionable.

"They oooh and ah. It's really fun," she said.

Additionally, Svoboda has taught a series of basic nutrition classes titled, "Fuel Your Family Right," which is geared toward adults and specifically Families with children. The classes also involve cooking, she said. Additionally, Svoboda co-facilitates other classes with other K-State Research and Extension staff.

"My interest in the nutrition field is centered around community nutrition," she said. "K-State Research and Extension provides the opportunity for me to translate my research-based knowledge of nutrition into basic information that enhances people's everyday lives."

In her spare time, which is very little she joked, Svoboda said she enjoys planned activities with friends and Family, shopping, exercising and decorating "in a thrifty way."

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