

COMMUNITY CORNER

Army Family Action Plan needs input, volunteers to make difference

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

The Army Family Action Plan has been in place since 1983. Since then it has helped sustain our all-volunteer force by listening to and implementing suggestions from our Soldiers and Families at the installation level on up to the Department of Defense.

Your chance to participate is coming up soon. The first opportunity will be for the teens on Fort Riley to address issues that concern them. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 3, the Fort Riley Teen AFAP Conference will be held at the Middle School Teen Center.

Teens, we need your participation. I know many of you were upset to hear of the skating rink's closing. Join in the conference as a delegate and help us come up with a solution. If you can't take part as a delegate to the teen con-



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ference, make sure you submit your issues and your ideas on what should be done about them using the AFAP form.

Army teens are an important part of our community and we want to make sure you have all the resources you need to help with the many transitions involved with growing up in the Army. The Teen AFAP Conference is a great way to get at those issues.

The following week, from Oct. 6 to 8, adults are invited to join in the Fort Riley AFAP Conference. Come those days and volunteer as a delegate or submit your issues ahead of time to be addressed by the committee. Free child care is available for conference delegates

who register ahead of time by calling 785-240-3243.

The AFAP Conference is another venue to get at issues that originate at town hall meetings, through the Interactive Customer Comment, or ICE system, or other feedback channels. This is where the change happens.

During both the teen and adult conferences, delegates will identify and prioritize the issues, talk about feasible solutions and what is the appropriate level to staff the solutions. Many issues are bigger than Fort Riley and will get passed on to the regional and possibly up the Department of the Army level.

For those issues that can be resolved here at Fort Riley, a AFAP Steering Committee meets quarterly to review the issues and monitor their progress. Some of the issues currently being monitored include:

- Getting a sit-down or family-style restaurant on post – This issue remains

active. Fort Riley has received an offer to build a Chili's across from the new Post Exchange. Guidelines require community support. The command group is working with community leaders to gain their support.

- No child care available in the fitness centers on post – This remains active. Picernie Military Housing will open its first neighborhood center Sept. 23 at Camp Forsyth. The center's fitness center will include a child care option. Also, the skating rink at King Field House is being turned into a dedicated fitness room, and space for child care is being added in the facility.

- A lack of activities for high school students on post – This issue remains active. The Middle School Teen Center offers weekend events and trips for teens to include basketball tournaments, movie nights, dances and trips to local parks and events. This issue is set to be reviewed at the next AFAP meeting.

Some issues that have been closed by

the AFAP Steering Committee:

- No playground in the Forsyth Neighborhood – In June, a playground was opened in Forsyth between Buckskin and Sunflower south of Conestoga with play equipment and a basketball court. The neighborhood center play area will open in September.

- Too few benches and garbage cans at McCormick Park – The playground area had additional security lighting and two park benches installed. Eight park benches were added to the three playgrounds at Moon Lake.

- Not enough parking at the Army Community Service Annex – A contract was awarded for the addition of 36 parking spaces which was completed in early August.

To find out more about the work of the AFAP Steering Committee, visit the AFAP page at www.riley.army.mil under the Army Community Service link. Slides from the last committee meeting are posted to keep you up to date.

AFAP conferences are a great opportunity to come out and be part of a working group that discusses problems that require help at the highest levels of government and the military.

Your participation is critical. Past conferences have brought enormously positive results as Army policies have been changed and Congress has passed legislation in support of Soldiers and their Families, all because of your participation and great ideas.

To submit an issue, drop off the form printed in the newspaper to ACS, Building 7264 on Custer Hill. Forms also are available via e-mail by contacting Michelle Simmons at 785-239-3242. Or you can simply fill out the form on the AFAP page at www.riley.army.mil.

If you would like to comment on this article or submit an idea for the Community Corner, e-mail rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.

Setting standards of living for a transforming Army

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Have you ever thought, "If the Army would just ask me how to fix this I could tell them."

The Army Family Action Plan program gives you the chance to do just that. AFAP is a program the Army put in place to ensure that standards of living in the Army keep pace with changing times. AFAP gives Soldiers, Families, retirees and civilians the opportunity to let Army leadership know what is working, what isn't and their ideas about how to fix issues.

HOW TO BE A PART OF THE AFAP PROCESS

1. Be a delegate

As a delegate you not only represent your community, you represent the Army. Delegates are placed into work groups to discuss issues that are submitted to the conference. You prioritize the top three issues and then, with the help of your team, you write the issue so that it can be presented to the Fort Riley leadership at the report-out the last day of the conference.

2. Submit issues

Everyone can't be a delegate, so the next best thing is to submit your issues. Don't complain to friends and neighbors. Tell AFAP what your concerns are and what you think should be done to address those concerns.

3. Volunteer to work the conference

The AFAP Conference is run by volunteers who care about the community and want to make life better at Fort Riley and across the Army. So volunteer to be a part of the conference staff.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my issue an AFAP issue?

Check your issue against the AFAP issue checklist. Does your issue:

- Relate to a well-being concern within the Department of Defense, the Department of Army or Fort Riley?
- Present a realistic solution or a creative alternative?
- Have broad impact?
- Appear attainable after considering current political and resource environments?
- Within the purview of Fort Riley, DoD or DA to influence?

Are there other ways for me to give

feedback about programs and services?

Yes. Three ways to provide input about services on Fort Riley are Interactive Customer Evaluation, Community FIRST focus groups and AFAP.

ICE is a Web-based system that enables you to easily submit online comment cards to a participating program/service manager from any computer located anywhere in the world. You can submit the card anonymously, but if you want the service provider to respond to your comment(s), you need to provide information necessary for them to contact you either by e-mail or phone. Because your comments are sent directly to the service provider, you can obtain a response within three business days. You can access ICE from the Fort Riley Web

site at www.riley.army.mil or you may visit one of the many ICE kiosks located throughout post.

Community FIRST Focus Groups are designed to identify and resolve issues that address your quality of life at Fort Riley. The intent of the focus group is to identify and discuss ideas or suggestions about services or programs on the installation. It is a time and place to bring up issues that can be resolved by the garrison commander or issues that need to be forwarded through the AFAP process.

Through AFAP, you have the opportunity to improve life throughout the Army. If you have an idea or suggestion about Armywide services or programs that could be improved, please fill out

an AFAP issue sheet.

How do I know which way is best for my particular issue?

ICE will give you a faster answer to concerns and give program managers a chance to work on problems. If you have used the ICE system or you feel that your issue meets the criteria listed above, then AFAP is where you need to be.

What are some examples of AFAP issues?

In the history of AFAP, 651 is-

112 legislation changes have been made. 141 Department of Defense or Army policies have been revised and 178 programs and services have been improved at the Army level. Examples include:

- Tricare for Life.
- Military Savings Plan.
- In-State tuition rates for military personnel and their dependants.
- Authorization for distributing

See AFAP, page 15