

COMMUNITY CORNER

Fort Riley growth tremendous over past five years, commander says

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

Fort Riley's tremendous growth over the last five years has brought with it an equally tremendous growth in economic impact to the Central Flint Hills Region and the state of Kansas. This growth began when Fort Riley and the CFHR welcomed the "Big Red One" home in 2006 after its 10-year stint in Germany. Fort Riley's Economic Impact Summary for 2010 shows that Fort Riley has significantly contributed to the community in terms of population and monetary growth to the tune of a \$2.2 billion economic impact in Fiscal Year 2010 alone.

In 2005, the year of the Base Realignment and Closure

announcement to Fort Riley, Division would return to Fort Riley. We had 10,060 assigned Soldiers and 12,714 Family members living on and off post. As of Sept. 30, 2010, that number was at 18,553 assigned Soldiers and 24,678 Family members. Because of deployments, not all of those Soldiers were here during all of FY 2010.

At the end of FY 2010, Fort Riley had 450 Family quarters for officers, 3,269 Family quarters for enlisted Soldiers and more than 7,000 barracks spaces. That gives Fort Riley more than 10,000



Col. Brown

quarters in which to house its Soldiers and Family members. The rest of our Soldiers and Families reside in the CFHR, which is made up of the eight counties surrounding post. Besides our Soldiers and their Families, Fort Riley employs more than 8,000 civilians who work to support our mission.

Within those eight counties, Fort Riley's Soldiers, Family members and civilians live, work, relax and shop. Overall, Fort Riley has had a total direct economic impact of more than \$2.2 billion. While the largest chunk, \$1.4 billion, of that fell into the payroll category, about \$375 million was spent on supplies, services and contracts. About \$230 million went into construction, just more than \$20 million for

education and more than \$116 million for health care.

If you look past the economic impact, however, I think Fort Riley has contributed something even greater to the CFHR – our Soldiers and Families. Soldiers live by the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Each of our Soldiers has volunteered for service to their country. It takes a special person to do this, and those people are living in the CFHR.

Those values the Army and its Soldiers uphold are transferred to the community when our Families volunteer in schools and churches, with Scouts and for other community organizations. Since such a small percentage of our

population volunteers for service, our community members get a chance to say something that many in our country can't and that is, "I know a U.S. Soldier." Those Soldiers helping build communities in Iraq and Afghanistan aren't just Soldiers; they are our neighbors. Our children play baseball together. Our Families support each other.

Besides the everyday interactions of our Soldiers, Families and community members, our units have partnered with towns across the CFHR. From these partnerships, our communities have built relationships with units, and our Soldiers have often learned civic lessons to take with them when they deploy to help build communities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many Soldiers and Families acknowledge Fort Riley as their favorite duty assignment.

The reason for this is because of the great communities around the installation and the great relationships our Soldiers, Families and civilians have within those communities. As we continue to work together, economically and personally within the CFHR, more and more Soldiers will want to call Kansas home while on active duty and after.

View the 2010 Economic Impact Summary at www.riley.army.mil under "Our Post" at the top of the page.

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

Post officials update community on Fort Riley's economic impact

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

During a recent Community Partnership Conference on education, updates were provided to community leaders on various topics affecting Fort Riley and the Central Flint Hills Region. Among those topics was the Economic Impact Summary for October 2009 to September 2010.

Craig Phillips, lead plans specialist, Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, said there are about 450 more Soldiers living in the CFHR than in 2009, but the number of civilians is down by about 200.

"That probably represents some retirements and possibly some increased hiring in on-post folks – folks who already live on post – military spouses – there's been some emphasis on that. So that probably reflects the reason some of those numbers have gone down just a little bit," he said.

While referring to the Fort Riley growth chart, community members could see the number of Soldiers, Families and civilians at Fort Riley from 2005 – prior to the Big Red One's return – to the present, as well as the potential for 2012 and 2015.

"The potential Families of Fort Riley reflects how many Families we could conceivably see here if every Soldier who

had a Family brought that Family here," Phillips said. "That's highly unlikely that we'll ever have them for a number of reasons, but it's a number we'd like to approach."

The chart shows an increase of actual Families at Fort Riley from 2011 to 2012, from 1,200 to 1,500 Families come to the region in part because of increased dwell times – fewer deployments and deployments of less frequency and duration.

Authorized Soldiers at Fort Riley shows there are about 18,000 with the potential of that number remaining around the same in the next few years.

Civilian personnel accounted for on the chart include Department of the Army civilians, as well as contractors – everybody who is non-uniformed who works on Fort Riley.

The number of civilians is up significantly, from more than 5,500 in 2005 to more than 8,000 presently.

"That number is projected to stay pretty much the same, but there's a number of factors that could influence that in the future," Phillips said.

Fort Riley's Economic Impact growth chart shows the increase since 2005 to present for payroll, supplies, services and contracts; construction; education; health care and Combined Federal Campaign contributions to local charities.

"Since about 2006, when

the Big Red One returned to Fort Riley, Fort Riley's total economic impact has increased 135 percent, from under a billion dollars to over \$2.2 billion. Overall, an increase of \$167 million in FY10 from FY09," Phillips said.

Specifically, payroll is up about \$50 million; supplies, services and contracts are up about \$86 million; education spending is up \$2 million; health care is up \$36 million; and CFC contributions were up by \$12,000, he said.

Construction was down \$1.9 million due to a decrease in construction projects on the installation.

Phillips went over the Fort Riley Net Public Benefit, a study which represents how much a Soldier and civilian employee within each county they reside contributes to the net public benefit of the county.

Soldiers and civilians in Riley County contribute more than \$3 million and Geary County more than \$4 million, with an average of \$1,000 per Soldier and civilian.

"Overall, in the Central Flint Hills Region, it's nearly \$9 million just in FY10. So having Soldiers, having civilians in your community is providing a public benefit to your governmental agencies."

The overall population associated with Fort Riley went up more than 2,000 from 2009.

"Population continues to increase overall; military went up slightly – mainly from more officers and warrant officers. The number of Family members went up on post, that reflects slightly more housing available on post, as well as larger houses that are being built, so more Family members can live in some of those larger homes," Phillips said. "Retirees showed a very slight increase. Civilians showed an overall reduction, again mainly from contractors, the reduced construction resulted in fewer contractors out here."

A new portion of the Economic Impact Summary is the projected population forecast and projected economic forecast.

"I spoke about a decrease in the frequency and duration of deployments that we expect to result in longer dwell times. That's going to result in a higher boots on the ground – the number of Soldiers actually here and not in theater," Phillips said.

In the past couple of years, Fort Riley has had 10,000 to 12,000 boots on the ground.

"We expect that to go up to 14,000 to 16,000, potentially a little more depending on what does happen with deployments in the future," Phillips said.

The increased number of Soldiers potentially results in 1,200 to 1,500 more Families,

he said.

"Civilians, contractor numbers, particularly construction contractors are going to decline as our (Base Realignment and Closure) related construction comes to an end. Otherwise, we believe the civilian population is going to stay relatively the same outside of primarily construction," Phillips said.

The economic forecast shows construction spending declining. It's going to stay constant until the new hospital is complete, at which time the forecast will drop back to pre-BRAC construction levels of \$50 to \$60 million a year, as opposed to \$200 million, Phillips said.

Garrison Commander Col. Kevin Brown attended a recent Regional Garrison Conference in San Antonio, where the Installation Management Command resource manager spoke about the reduced budgets the Army is facing.

"We always have to remind everyone where we were, where we are before we worry about where we are headed," Brown said. "We as an Army had a \$78 billion budget in 2001 before the Global War on Terror kicked off. This past year, we had a \$252 billion budget, so we've more than tripled."

Prior to the beginning of

the war, the Army wasn't fighting on two fronts and Soldiers weren't deployed.

"So there are obviously some growth warfighting reasons that budget needed to triple, but it will be reduced over the next few years and probably about \$30 billion reductions for our Army over the next four or five years," Brown said. "So when you hear that the Army's experiencing a \$30 billion reduction ... keep in mind that's from \$78 (billion) to \$252 (billion) down to \$212 (billion). So we're still going to be able to sustain our Army. It's the next logical progression. We just have to do our part and be more frugal in everything that we do."

Overall, because of the anticipation of the additional boots on the ground, the net public benefit should continue to increase.

"We anticipate that it's likely to reach \$10 million or more and will allow Fort Riley to be a significant contributor to the surrounding communities. The bottom line here is that, as near as we can anticipate the data that are available through FY13, we believe that Fort Riley's economic impact is going to remain over \$2 billion," Phillips said.

For more information on the Economic Impact Summary, visit www.riley.army.mil.

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