Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Army awards Fort Drum for its partnerships in the North Country

Fort Drum, NY -- Department of the Army officials recognized Fort Drum with the 2019 Army Community Partnership Award on Dec. 5 during a ceremony at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

The annual award presentation honors commands, installations and state National Guards that have improved readiness, driven modernization and contributed to reform initiatives by partnering with community agencies. Fort Drum was among 10 honorees this year.

While Fort Drum partners with many state, county and local agencies, the award highlighted the installation’s collaboration with three of its North Country neighbors: Jefferson County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), and New York state and local first responders.

“We are all very honored to be recognized for something that, here in the North Country, we have known for a long time. And that is the value of having a shared mission and creating lasting friendships with our community partners," said Col. Jeffery Lucas, Fort Drum garrison commander. “We remain committed to strengthening our ties with our North Country partners, as well as developing new ones when we are able.”

**Jefferson County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)**

After receiving approval from U.S. Army Installation Management Command and the deputy assistant secretary of the Army, Fort Drum Garrison and Cornell Cooperative Extension entered into an intergovernmental agreement in October 2018. This added 19 CCE personnel to the Army Community Service team.

The ACS staff works seamlessly with CCE professionals to provide critical support services and resources to thousands of Soldiers and family members, through programs to include Employment Readiness, Family Advocacy Program and Army Emergency Relief.

Cathy Ferran, ACS chief, said that having additional personnel helps in developing life skills in Soldiers and family members, as well as training military personnel and unit volunteers in Soldier and Family Readiness Group duties and responsibilities. It decreases wait times for appointments and provides a unified approach to helping community members during times of high stress, such as deployments, adverse financial situations and major family life events.

“Having this agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension strengthens our ability to provide the services and support that our Soldiers and families rely on,” she said.

Beyond this partnership, Cornell Cooperative Extension has long supported Fort Drum Soldiers and family members and has participated in such annual events as Outdoor Adventure Day, Month of the Military Child and Military Spouse Appreciation Day. Cornell Cooperative Extension educators have offered several family cooking classes on post, as well as 4-H Military Youth Clubs for children from kindergarten through 12th grade.

CCE also works with the Fort Drum Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program to provide information about farming and agricultural careers for transitioning Soldiers.

**Emergency Services and Mutual Aid (New York State Police, Watertown Police Department, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office and City of Watertown Fire Department)**

Fort Drum fulfills an Army requirement for having a Special Reaction Team (SRT) through a memorandum of understanding with the New York State Police, which provides the installation with a Special Operations Response Team (SORT) capable of responding to high-threat incidents.

Without this MOU, Fort Drum would need an SRT of about 12 Department of the Army civilians and four Soldiers. Since the installation does not incur any costs for the MOU with the NYSP, the Fort Drum Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) was able to partially modernize its fire vehicle fleet to enhance their response to critical incidents.

Additionally, through the exchange of information, training opportunities and mutual aid agreements, Fort Drum, state and local first responders have strengthened their professional relationship to the benefit of all community members.

The Fort Drum DES maintains mutual aid agreements with Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties, and provides additional responders and equipment to support emergencies that exceed local resources. Between October 2018 and August 2019, Fort Drum Fire and Emergency Service responded to 44 requests for firefighting support and 152 requests for EMS support.

Furthermore, Fort Drum has worked with the North Country emergency medical services and other agencies to establish a mutual aid-based medical evacuation plan to enable efficient and timely medical transport from training areas to local hospitals.

**Development Authority of the North Country (DANC)**

In 2017, the Development Authority of the North Country served as the overall project management agency to facilitate the creation of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). This was a multi-year examination to identify problems and develop solutions to encroachment issues for the ground and airspace surrounding Fort Drum. DANC organized three sets of public workshops and open houses as the study was being established and helped form the JLUS Compatibility Committee.

“The goal of the JLUS is to protect the viability of current and future training operations at Fort Drum, while also guiding community growth and sustaining environmental and economic vitality in the North Country,” said Sonja Draught, Plans, Analysis and Integration Office chief.

The JLUS Compatibility Committee advocates for increased communication and transparency on decisions related to land use regulation, conservation and natural resource management issues that affect communities and the military.

The committee advocates for North Country development with minimal adverse effect on training and operational capability of the installation.

 “The development of the JLUS Compatibility Committee created a ‘one voice’ position to improve community relations and shared understanding,” Draught said. “The community benefits by ensuring the long-term success of Fort Drum as the northeastern United States’ largest power-projection platform and the economic driver of the North Country.”

A long history of partnerships with Fort Drum, DANC was established in 1985 by the New York State Legislature to address the community and infrastructure needs of the North Country and Fort Drum. DANC owns and operates water and waste transmission lines connecting Fort Drum to the City of Watertown’s water and waste treatment facilities.

The Army Community Partnership Awards have been presented annually since 2016 and have recognized 28 Army entities and their communities. To learn more about the Army Community Partnership Program and award recipients, visit https://dcsg9.army.mil/partnerships/awards.html.

Caption: U.S. Army Community Partnership Award recipients from Fort Drum and the North Country are honored during the recognition ceremony Dec. 5 at the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia. The Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, Lt. Gen. Jason T. Evans hosted this event. (U.S. Army photo by Mr. Leroy Council)

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