Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum Leaders’ Focus on Sustainability Key to Local Economic Impact

Fort Drum, NY – While hard to believe, after 35 years\* of talking about the economic impact of Fort Drum on the North Country, the idea that the installation directly contributed more than a whopping $1.6 billion to the local economy in 2022 could arguably be touted as “old news.”  In fact, the more interesting question to ask may be “How can we ensure another 35 years?”

It's an enormous task to tackle that question while also ensuring readiness to deploy, fight and win anywhere in the world within days – if not hours – of notice.  As Senior Commander, Major General Gregory K. Anderson must rely on his full spectrum of leaders – both Soldiers and Civilian – to work together seamlessly, home and deployed, to that end.  While the mission-essential tasks vary greatly, MG Anderson’s framework for success applies in all efforts.

“Good mission command practices do not just happen,” Anderson said, shortly after taking command in September. “They are the result of the right command climate, effective leader development, planning, preparation, and adherence to standards.”

It’s essentially one team, one fight – but with many fronts.

While the 10th Mountain Division leaders focus on dominating the multi-domain battlefield, installation leaders are strategizing to effectively navigate the many facets of sustainability.  With the starting point recognizing that leaders who are working to provide for current needs are already too late, the idea of sustainability becomes bigger than simply continuing to exist at status quo, but to grow to meet the needs of an uncertain future with unknown resourcing.

And as this year’s Fort Drum Economic Impact Statement once again illustrates, warfighter readiness, fiscal growth in the community, and sustainability are inextricably linked.

The Army Climate Strategy is a key roadmap for planning that supports the future warfighter, bolsters the installation’s value to the Army and competes well for resourcing, all which rank highly among the many elements to sustainability, especially for power projection platforms like Fort Drum.

“Because of their role in critical defense missions and preparing for deploying forces… Power Projection Platforms will have priority for energy and water resilience projects,” as stated in the Army Climate Strategy.\*\*

Fort Drum already boasts an electrical “microgrid” – the necessary on-post infrastructure for energy independence - and is funded for a new groundwater well-field, establishing momentum toward meeting the goals of the Climate Strategy that the Garrison Commander is keen on accelerating.

“We are especially looking forward to the recommendations of Army Corps of Engineers’ study on our most viable options for energy independence, which we expect in the next couple of months,” said Colonel James J. Zacchino, Fort Drum garrison commander. “The Army is committed to 100% carbon-pollution free electricity, meeting the needs of installations by 2030.  Considering we already have the microgrid infrastructure in place, our aim is to be among the first across the finish line.”

He hopes that hearing about this year’s $1.6 billion economic impact isn’t simply good news “as expected” but also serves as a call to action.

“What is good for Fort Drum is good for the North Country, and vice versa,” Zacchino said. “As we work on our resiliency, we see our neighbors doing the same, and it’s awesome.  As Major General Anderson says, success doesn’t just happen.  Our future sustainability depends on our continued efforts.”

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See the newly released FY 2022 Economic Impact Statement, along with previous iterations back to 2016, here:

<https://home.army.mil/drum/index.php/about/economic-impact-statement>

\*Fort Drum began collecting data related to local economic impact in 1988.

\*\*This quote is from page 7 of the Army Climate Strategy available here:

<https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/about/2022_army_climate_strategy.pdf>