Press Release

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Fort Drum’s financial management professionals ensure year-end spending yields big results on infrastructure projects

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – There are still a few months left on the calendar, but the year is already over – sort of – for financial management employees across the Army.

Sept. 30 was the last day of the fiscal year and the deadline to execute congressionally appropriated funds in support of critical garrison missions.

The Fort Drum Directorate of Resource Management (DRM) team spearheads the closeout process to ensure directorates meet their financial obligations and everyone has what they need to keep installation operations running smoothly.

“This is not something that most people know about, or are involved with, because just a few key people throughout post make this happen,” said Mark Hawes, DRM director. “Most people hear ‘fiscal year-end closeout’ and they think people are rushing to waste the government’s money. That’s just not what this is about at all.”

The 2022 Fiscal Year closeout process has yielded several Directorate of Public Works infrastructure projects for roadways and roofs, the renovation of two barracks buildings, the replacement of a failed chiller system in the Education Center and a new communication system for the Mountain Operations Center.

“There were also some things we were able to do that will help us out the next fiscal year, like fully fund the custodial contract through March 2023,” Hawes said.

The Bldg. 2708 Central Maintenance Facility renovation project improves maintenance capabilities for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade and ensures enhanced safety for the Soldiers and greater protection of infrastructure and the environment.

The building design includes a three-stage filtration system and a paint booth that includes carbon filtration devices to remove contaminants before they are discharged to the environment. It is compliant with New York State Air Emission Control regulations to reduce toxic and hazardous air emissions and decreases Soldier exposure to harmful chemicals contained in certain primers used in helicopter maintenance.

Norman McGuire, Fort Drum Directorate of Public Works deputy director, said that this facility renovation, estimated at more than $4 million, is one of the key projects this year.

“This is an important one, because it improves readiness capabilities while reducing environmental, health and safety risks from emerging contaminants in future operations,” he said. “The facility is designed with maximum engineering controls and capture-and-containment capability that will ensure efficient transitions to new weapons systems or chemicals that may be required for new or existing systems sustainment.”

Hawes said that the DRM team takes a collaborative approach among directorate program analysts, contracting and budget personnel to create a solid plan to fully execute their assigned budgets on critical mission essential items.

He said that the longstanding relationship among DRM, PW and the 925th Contracting Battalion and Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC) at Fort Drum allows them to implement the closeout process with ease and precision.

“We’ve all been doing this a long time, with the same core group of people, and that makes it easier,” Hawes said. “We have meetings throughout the year, and then bi-weekly or even daily at year-end. It’s just really about everyone working together and positioning the garrison so they can quickly execute funds.”

During Fiscal Year 2022, the 925th and MICC team completed 2,991 contract actions (highest in the MICC), with an average procurement acquisition lead time of 4.5 days (the lowest in the MICC).

Erin Wilcher, DRM budget officer, said their system has proven to be effective, year after year, because of advanced preparation.

“Prior planning is the key to ensuring all available funding will be executed in direct support of critical garrison funding priorities,” she said. “It takes a team of dedicated professionals, and we have good relationships with the other agencies, to make the process work. And with fiscal uncertainties going forward, it’s good that we can go after things in advance since we don’t really know what our budget will look like this coming year.”

Because of the system developed for the closeout operations, the DRM team is ready to execute – even with little notice – when additional funding becomes available through higher command.

“And that just speaks to our reputation of executing funds properly and efficiently,” Hawes said. “We are able to do a lot of good things with these funds for Fort Drum as a whole, and that’s something to be proud of.”

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