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JBLM wins three environmental honors

Marisa Petrich/Northwest Guardian

Published: 02:14PM April 21st, 2011

Joint Base Lewis-McChord was recently chosen as a pilot site for two of the Army's Net Zero projects, adding to the installation's recent environmental winning streak.

"The goal of Net Zero is not only good for the region's ecosystems, but increasing the U.S. military's operational efficiency will aid missions in areas of the world where energy and water supply (are) in question," U.S. Rep. Adam Smith said in a statement.

Smith said the announcement "confirms that Joint Base Lewis-McChord is leading the charge to reduce the environmental impact of all U.S. military installations."

JBLM also received the Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 Champions of Environmental Leadership and Green Government Award for waste management last year, as well as the Army's Sustainability Award for a non-industrial installation.

This led to another recent win: the Department of Defense announced Tuesday that JBLM had won the Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for Sustainability by a non-industrial organization.

These newest recognitions reinforce JBLM's existing goals to create a more environmentally friendly installation.

The Net-Zero Pilot Program, for instance, will increase Armywide efforts to conserve resources by identifying consumption targets for installations across the country equal to the production levels of the specified resources.

Of 100 self-nominations from 60 installations, 20 were selected to go net-zero for energy, water, waste or all three by 2020. JBLM will be pursuing a perfect balance in both water and waste.

This will ultimately help with the mission of training Soldiers, now and in the future. By conserving resources now, there will be more available down the road.

"We try to make things more circular in nature, and because of that we make them more effective and efficient," JBLM Public Works Environmental Division Chief Paul Steucke said.

Though no extra funding is coming, the Army will offer its selected installations technical assistance for determining what technologies and methods to use. This in turn will help develop programs to be employed at other bases later on.

When it comes down to it, sustainability is helping everyone on base — and a lot of them are helping sustainability.

"These are accomplishments that come from ... managers across the installation, across all directorates," Steucke said, noting that the recognition is empowering because so many people were a part of it.

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