

Briefs

Jingle Bell 5K

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk host an installation Jingle Bell 5K Run Dec. 16 to promote esprit de corps among units on Fort Polk before Soldiers depart on winter block leave. The event kicks off at 6:30 a.m. Dec. 16, with each unit staging in their respective footprint. Brig. Gen. Gary Brito, commander, JRTC and Fort Polk, starts the run at the intersection of Fourth Street and Alabama Avenue and heads south along Alabama Avenue. Units along the run route will fall into formation as Brito passes. Once the runners return to the route's starting point, Brito will stop at the corner of Fourth Street and Alabama Avenue and greet units as they complete the run. Family members are encouraged to participate in the run. Pets are not allowed. Community members are encouraged to line the route and cheer on runners.

Commissary hours

The Fort Polk Commissary announces the following hours for the Christmas holidays: Dec. 23 from 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Dec. 24 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Dec. 25 and 26, closed; Dec. 27 resume normal hours from 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Call 531-2747 for more information.

Special Ops fair

The Fort Benning, Georgia Special Operations Recruiting Team hosts an in-service career fair Wednesday and Thursday, from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. daily, at the Home of Heroes Recreation Center, bldg 1455, Fort Polk.

For more information call (931) 627-4045 or email erik.w.jeffreys.mil@mail.mil.

SFL-TAP events

The Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Program, located in bldg 4275, 7438 California Ave. at Polk Army Airfield, hosts events for Soldiers 24 months from retirement or 18 months from ETS and their family members. Upcoming events cover a variety of employment opportunities and include:

- Transitioning Soldiers who are interested in welding or pipefitting careers can call 531-4621/1591 or email jean.c.graves.civ@mail.mil to learn about the Career Skills Program. Classes meet at the SFL-TAP in classroom 2 Monday.

- For information about careers in construction and manufacturing, register online at nextopvets.org/veterans, complete the three-week online training, then call SFL-TAP at 531-4621 to take the written

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Vernon Parish School District receives 'A'

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

LEESVILLE, La.— The Louisiana Department of Education released Nov. 21 the 2015-16 school and district performance reports, showing a continued increase in student achievement in nearly every measure of academic progress in Louisiana's public schools.

In 2015-2016, students made progress on multiple measures including tests in grades three through eight, American College Test, graduation rate, and performance in credentialing programs such as Advanced Placement and dual enrollment.

The Vernon Parish School District fared particularly well in state rankings, said James Williams, Vernon Parish School District superintendent, having received an "A."

The scores make the district one of the top 10 within the state, moving from eighth place in 2014-15 to sixth place. The top two districts in the state are independent. This makes Vernon Parish the fourth highest-ranked public school system in Louisiana.

Vernon Parish had 12 "A" schools in this year's rankings. They are:

- Anacoco Elementary
- Anacoco High School
- Evans High School
- Hicks High School
- Hornbeck High School (was a "B" in 2014-15).
- Leesville High School (raised from "B")
- North Polk Elementary School (raised from "B")

- Pitkin High School
- South Polk Elementary (now Parkway Elementary (raised from a "B"))
- Rosepine Elementary
- Rosepine High School
- Simpson High School (raised from a "B")

Williams said this was cause for celebration, but the school district would not rest on its laurels.

"We recognize our success and commend all the students, parents, teachers, administration and school board that together work so hard to make this a continual trend. We are very proud and excited, but we are certainly not completely satisfied. We believe that once you are satisfied, you have quit improving," William said.

Bringing Vernon Parish schools from "good to great" is an effort between the Vernon Parish School Board, Fort Polk Progress, Louisiana educators and Fort Polk in a partnership called the Education Initiative.

The initiative focuses on school performances and benchmarks Vernon Parish schools against not only the national average, but also other schools supporting Army installations.

"We are making incredible progress," said Col. David "Gregg" Athey, Fort Polk garrison commander. "We are all stakeholders in the future of military children residing at Fort Polk. The quality of education is a driving force that has a high visibility well above the local level.

"The successes of the Education Initiative to date have made profound impacts on how education in the Fort Polk area is viewed nationally," said Athey.



You're invited!

The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk installation tree lighting event takes place today at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Post Exchange complex.

Santa and Mrs. Claus are scheduled to appear along with a few elves for photo opportunities.

Enjoy festive music, refreshments and more.

Trees for Troops will be on hand to give away free Christmas trees at the old commissary parking lot.