

## **Hood Celebrates America Recycles Day**

By Christine Luciano

Communities around the nation celebrated America Recycles Day to encourage individuals to recycle, to buy recycle products, and to bring awareness the benefits of recycling. The theme for this year's event was 'It all comes back to you.'

Fort Hood celebrated the event with an open house at its Recycle Center and a district-wide 'Go Green' event.

Staff Sergeant James Snider from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) arrived early on America Recycles Day with his cans. "This is a great program that brings in knowledge about the recycle center and the services available on post," Snider said. "Recycling is important and if we all do our part to help the environment things will get better."

During the open house, the Recycle Center conducted recycle tours of the facility and paid \$1 a pound for 1765 pounds of aluminum cans from the first 50 individuals. After the 50th individual, the recycle center paid 50 cents a pound for aluminum cans. Each visitor spun a wheel to receive free giveaways like reusable shopping bags, green back packs, recycle hats, and pen and keychain sets.

Fort Hood environmental experts were also at the City of Killeen's GIS Day event that had a 'Go Green' theme. More than 1400 sixth grade students from Fort Hood and the surrounding communities went through several presentations about geographic information systems and the environment.

"You can tell the kids are really into this 'Go Green' event," Emily Fortune, a sixth grade math teacher at Audie Murphy Middle School, said. "This event was a great opportunity to instill important values to the students about protecting the environment."

"If we don't help protect the environment, someday it is going to be bad because of all the pollution," said Mitchell Dickerson, a sixth grader at Audie Murphy Middle School. "There are simple things we can do like recycle paper, cans, and oil, but the most important thing is that we all go green."

"We want everyone to know that recycling provides many environmental and economic benefits," Jaycee Turnquist, Recycle Center Business Manager, said. "This year the money generated from recycling went back into the installation for pollution prevention projects, \$100,000 for the troop incentive program, and \$150,000 for Family events such as the July 4 Freedom Fest, Month of the Military Child, Welcome Home events and Earth Day Spectacular."

One of the pollution prevention projects includes creating a regional smart growth master plan that improves water air quality, reduced development costs, reduce public service costs, and provides efficient transportation for the area.

The smart growth master plan is a step forward in Fort Hood's 'Communities Engaging for a Sustainable Future' partnership towards building a greener future with surrounding cities that include Killeen, Copperas Cove, Harker Heights, and Gatesville.

"This is a great opportunity for the communities to come together to share experiences and challenges related to creating sustainability and a green culture," Randy Doyle, Pollution Prevention Program Manager, said. "The regional smart growth master plan and urbanism strategy for Central Texas will help lessen the environmental impacts of development and create sustainable design."

Fort Hood and the surrounding communities are moving forward with a draft memorandum of understanding that will strengthen community relationships and environmental stewardship. "The MOU will build new community partnerships and will support the Army Strategy for the Environment to strengthen sustained and sound environmental stewardship through communication, coordination, consultation, and collaboration," Doyle said.

The Fort Hood Recycle Center is the largest recycle facility in the Army. When the recycle program first started in 1992, the installation had sold 1.2 million pounds of recyclable material, but today that number

has increased to 19.4 million pounds of materials sold. By accepting recyclable material such as paper, cardboard, plastic, compact discs, aluminum cans, and brass, these items stay out of landfills.

“In October, the Recycle Center gave \$100,000 to DFMWR for Soldiers’ use,” Turnquist said. The funds go in at the battalion level and are broken down by company. It ended up being about \$2 for each Soldier.

To help Soldiers in their recycling efforts, the recycle center will issue each company level unit four 35 gallon recycle containers and 10 small desk side containers.

“According to our surveys more than half the trash that ends up in the landfill is recyclable”, Turnquist said. “Our goal is to reduce the amount of recyclable products sent to the landfill and generate more funds to give back to our Soldiers and their Families.”

Turnquist emphasized that it is everyone’s responsibility to think and act green. “Next time you throw something away, consider recycling it,” Turnquist said. “Recycling means more money for our Soldiers and support for Family events while helping to protect the environment.”