

Directorate of Public Works- Environmental Division

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Fort Hood wins Secretary of the Army Environmental Quality Award

By Christine Luciano

For a third year in a row, Fort Hood is celebrating recognition for environmental excellence.

Fort Hood was announced as one of nine 2013 Secretary of the Army Environmental Award winners with distinction for environmental quality at a non-industrial installation and will go on to compete for the Secretary of Defense Environmental Award this spring.



The Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards represent the highest honor in the field of environmental science conferred by the Army and recognizes environmental restoration, natural resource conservation and overall environmental quality initiatives by Army installations.

Fort Hood attributes its environmental success to the full engagement and support of senior commanders and community partners, focus on Soldiers' training and Family support and environmental responsibility integrated into daily activities.

"Fort Hood's comprehensive environmental efforts help to reduce the installation's environmental footprint, encourage community involvement and promote environmental stewardship," said Steve Burrow, chief of environmental programs.

The installation was recognized for its Net Zero Waste efforts, successful recycle program, environmental compliance assessment team's efforts, training and outreach, solar energy projects and pollution prevention projects.

One example of their efforts is to reduce that amount of trash that ends in the landfill by the year 2020. As a Net Zero Waste installation, the goal means working together to recycle more in the blue recycle containers, reducing excess materials, and finding ways to repurpose products.

In the past two years, Fort Hood initiated several projects including installation-wide yard sales, implementing single stream recycling in Family housing, a partnership with the commissaries and local pig to prevent spoiled fruit, vegetables and baked goods from ending up in the landfill and a partnership with Housing to donate furniture to Soldiers and non-profit organizations.

"These initiatives have cut the amount of trash going into the landfill by about 23 percent," said Jennifer Rawlings, net zero waste program manager.

Each year, the diversion goal increases by 5% percent and this year's goal is 55 percent.

"Last year, we almost met our goal of 50 percent," said Rawlings. "We diverted 48 percent of trash from ending up in landfill but a lot more can still be recycled."

With more than 1,800 blue recycle containers across the installation, it is too easy to find one for your recyclable goods. In the past year, the recycle program expanded its services to accept new recyclables like Styrofoam, hard drives, all plastics 1 through 7, metal and plastic blinds, holiday lights and shoes. The new products helped the recycle program to bring in more material this past fiscal year making recycling green on both ends.

"On the front end, it's green because you are saving the planet, resources and materials," said Mike Bush, recycling manager. "But on the back end, if you can't have economic gain and you can't make money then it becomes suddenly not so feasible."

Fort Hood makes it a priority to inform and educate Soldiers, Families, civilians, contractors and surrounding communities to work together for a greener future.

Fort Hood's extensive training, environmental compliance assessment team and outreach programs provide opportunities to educate, inform and provide innovative environmental solutions. Over the past two years, the environmental compliance assessment team conducted 660 assessments and trained more than 12,000 personnel. The team provides support to units, Garrison directorates and tenants and conducts audits to ensure environmental compliance.

"The team serves as a middle man to help advise and assist commanders. We are more of an 'assistance' team than an 'assessment' team," said Glenn Collier, environmental protection specialist. "Yes, we do assess all activities, but we are a resource to assist commanders and help them have successful environmental programs."

Fort Hood's environmental programs focus on enhancing mission readiness and environmental excellence at all levels on the installation.

"The environmental division encourages everyone to take an active role as environmental stewards," said Burrow. "Rethink your lifestyle, make changes to your daily routines and take advantage of the environmental services available."

For more information on environmental and recycle services, call 287-6499.