

The Liaison

Volume 6, Issue 1

March 2007

What Do BRAC fighters do in the off season?

What are the community issues FDRLO addresses as part of its continuing mission?

FDRLO's strategic action plan defines five major goals:

- ◆ *Ensure the long term viability of Fort Drum,*
- ◆ *Improve the understanding between military and civilian communities in the region,*
- ◆ *Engage the military and community leaders in solving problems of mutual concern,*
- ◆ *Provide continuity in community relations that bridges the frequent change in military and community leadership but carries on their mutual responsibilities,*
- ◆ *Establish a communication network that assists the military and community leaders in carrying out their mutual responsibilities.*

There are many activities highlighted under these goals. Much of our work plan is delegated or tasked to specialty committees or Task Forces. As an update of the continuing work of FDRLO, we share these reports on Task Force specific activities.

Housing Task Force:

Despite significant gains in closing the housing gap, a tremendous challenge still remains to meet a market need for an additional 900+ units. The majority of these units need to be moderately priced rental units. In addition to keeping already planned development projects on track, this task force will continue to search out optimal sites for future development, seek additional funds for secondary financing, and structure tax credits or other incentives to leverage investor interest. While the exact number of necessary houses is at best a moving target, every effort will be made to monitor the market to ensure that no segment of the market is overbuilt. Not an easy task, but one this group is capable of handling. And we thank them for their untiring energy and dedication.

The robust market in private development of 'for-sale' homes has created a primary and secondary market for new or "new to you" homes for buyers. Much of it is affordable properties, great for first time buyers. Many first time and prospective buyers will need training to take advantage of these opportunities. The task force partnering with other local entities, banks, realtors, and governmental agencies will be part of that effort.

Economic Development Task Force:

This task force has focused its efforts in three areas. A Business and Resource Gap Analysis was commissioned by the FDRLO last spring to determine how to leverage Fort Drum for business development and attraction in the Fort Drum Region. This involves identification of purchasing trends for both local and national military consumers, identification of primary and secondary industries whose staffing needs best fit with the skill sets available in the local work force and Fort Drum related work force (family members and retirees) and, finally, development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing plan to achieve these goals.

A business survey conducted last year confirmed the need for additional opportunities for workshops and training to introduce local firms to the world of government purchasing. Focused efforts include establishing Department of Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) locally. Large governmental units with elaborate purchasing structures require new tools like PTAC's to navigate them. The task force continues its effort to establish a local branch of an existing PTAC in this area. In addition, the task force is working with the Small Business Development Center to host the day long "Selling to the Government" session, on March 28th.

Defining and profiling the work force available in Drum Country for potential new companies has long been a challenge for economic development agencies. Sponsorship of and introduction of the North Star web site is seen as an opportunity to help match employers and employees. It will also provide a training tool for the development of local talent to meet job interests and needs. This effort, while ambitious in its scope, can provide opportunities and options to reverse the "brain drain, the export of well trained and very talented youth from the area.

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Chairman's Corner



Keith B. Caughlin, Chair

As over 8,000 deployed soldiers return this summer, in the midst of the housing construction season, road construction and infrastructure improvements across the North Country, we will have to stay composed and exercise patience.

A soldier's spouse told me of all the places she and her family have been assigned, "Watertown is the only place where I can miss my green-turn arrow at an intersection and not get honked at". She described her daughter alerted her to make the turn, but not one of the cars behind her had beeped.

That example of North Country patience is a good reminder to us all as the Division Headquarters, Sustainment Brigade and Aviation Brigade return from their block leaves following a successful year deployed to Afghanistan. Many of these 3,000 soldiers were settled in the North Country as they departed in 2005/2006. They returned to a community grateful for their service and to their happy families.

That patience and community support will be tested again as the Third Brigade Combat Team Spartans return from their extended tour in Afghanistan in May and the Second Brigade Combat Team Commandos head back from Iraq in August. Their, hopefully, summer return to Ft. Drum will put more Division soldiers in the North Country than at any time since 1943, when three Divisions trained for WWII.

Composed and Patient

There will be a few weeks this summer (before the First Brigade Combat Team deploys to Iraq) when over 12,000 Division soldiers will be present at Ft. Drum.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley put it kindly when he described recently the "housing challenge" we face as a community. The Housing Task Force and the array of individuals and entities involved in building homes and apartments - municipalities, local and state agencies, developers, lenders, planners, architects, and construction workers- are grinding through the process. Mountain Community Homes on Ft. Drum and the private developers in Jefferson and Lewis Counties are getting at it, however, we are not there yet.

As over 8,000 deployed soldiers return this summer, in the midst of the housing construction season, road construction and infrastructure improvements across the North Country, we will have to stay composed and exercise patience. Maj. Gen. Freakley coined the term in a December 2006 video teleconference update from his CJTF-76 Headquarters, "**Climb to Glory - Patiently**", and we will.

BRAC FIGHTERS WORK (Continued from page 1)

Growth Management Task Force

Growth Management – Smart Growth: perhaps to some terms to consider an oxymoron at best. Nevertheless, this committee is tasked with identifying and promoting best practices for local communities grappling with the impacts of expanding populations and businesses. How can Drum Country communities best approach these changes and harness their energy as opportunity rather than threats to the region's quality of life?

There are two parts to the current plan. The first is a training program launched on February 21st. Held at JCC and coordinated by the Center for Community Studies under contract with FDRLO, this eleven-part series of workshops will run through June 2008. The programs are directed at planning board members, zoning

board members, and town and village officials – the individuals on the front line facing the impacts of the Fort Drum expansion. Special attention is and will be paid to the differing nature and types of impact these communities experience. Consequently flexibility will be important as new topics and needs are identified during the sessions.

The second part will involve issuance of an RFP for a variety of planning phases: profiling the growth impacts from Fort Drum expansion; an analysis phase with "reality checks"; a public engagement phase that addresses the implications of growth identified in the first two phases; a visual preference survey; and finally a strategic plan identifying goals, managed growth principles, and alternatives to prevent encroachment. The time frame for this part of the activity will parallel the training phase.

(Continued on page 4)

Community Career Web Launched

*What job opportunities are there in this area?
What are the education or skill level requirements?
How and where can I train for that position?*

Answers to queries like these can now be found on the newest resource for job seekers and those seeking career development in the North Country:

NorthStar® Community Career Web.

NorthStar® Community Career Web is an innovative, web-based tool created to serve Jefferson and Lewis Counties in their workforce-related needs. This ground breaking initiative is designed to enhance the community's economy by connecting students and job seekers with local education and employment options and tracking the results. Career exploration and development programs, such as job skills training, skills assessment, job shadowing, and internships, are an added dimension of this unique community-based project.

This is a collaborative effort of Northern Area Health Education Center, Inc. (NAHEC) Northern New York Community Foundation (NNYCF), Jefferson County Job Development Corporation (JCJDC), Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Jefferson Community College (JCC), Jefferson-Lewis BOCES and Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO).

NorthStar© Community Career Web connects education, work, and community. It is a pathway for users to actively engage in career planning, development and securing employment.

NorthStar© Community Career Web combines efforts of workforce and economic development under one umbrella to maximize impact on the local community. The result is a coordinated, systemic approach to matching the supply of available workers with the demands of the local workforce.



The program is based on the successful NAHEC program, MyHealthCareer.org, in place in the tri-county area for the health professions.

FDRLO, through its Economic Development Task Force, is committed to connecting employers and employees and improving the regional pool of applicants. After several special presentations at both Task Force and Board level, the FDRLO Board of Directors approved \$20,000 to support the program at its November meeting.

Keith Caughlin, FDRLO Chair, explains that the job-match and career development site will be open to all. "The program is available to job seekers of all stripes, military, civilian, retired or otherwise."

Doug Schelleng, FDRLO's Economic Development Task Force Chairman, explains "The web-based model will help employers in the region find well-qualified local employees and could bring new employers and employees to the region."

The project is being rolled out in phases beginning this month with presentations to students and adult users as well as the development of employer Recruitment Zone portals. Community programs such as job skills training, job shadowing, skill assessment, and internships will roll out later this spring and summer.

NorthStar® - Charting the course for tomorrow's workforce today!
www.northstarweb.org/jefflewis

What's Been Happening in the Housing Arena— 2006 Annual Update

Following up on the information previously shared in this column, below are details of the 2006 data tallied by Jefferson County Planning Department. Thanks to our friends at the Jefferson County Planning office for their help with this information.



Lewis County Activity	2006 Q1-3	2006 Q4	Total 2006	Total 2005
Single Family Building Permits	117	22	139	93
Single Family Certificates of Occupancy	73	15	88	59

Our thanks also to Joe Baruth, Lewis County Manager, for providing updated data for Lewis County.

Jefferson County Housing Units	2006 Total Units	2005 Total units*
New Single Family Homes	306	295
New Mobile Homes	121	94
New Multi-family	24	24
Rehabilitation resulting in new Units	18	39
Total	469	452

Construction Indicators

Post-Construction Phase
- Certificates of Occupancy Issued

2005 Cumulative Results (Q1-Q4) through December 31st as adjusted from earlier reports by County Planning as necessary to reflect clarifications /adjustments from permitting officials.

compared to

2006 Cumulative Results (Q1-Q4) through December 31st

Represents only those units added to the housing stock and certified for occupancy, as reported by Jefferson County and local building code enforcement officials. Accuracy is limited by the percentage of surveys returned by local officials each quarter. All information is exclusive of any housing construction activity on Fort Drum.

BRAC Fighters Work (Continued from page 2)

Drum 2020

This is the on-going endeavor, an extension of our BRAC effort, to keep all segments of our membership and community aware of activities at Fort Drum.

Hard as it may be to believe, not everyone stays current on the status of RCI housing, soldier deployment cycles, changes in command, and general resource for many things Fort Drum related. This group is tasked with staying current and sharing their knowledge through speakers bureau, printed materials, and on the internet.

The biggest news in this arena is the December launch of DrumCountry.com. This new web site offers a warm welcome to all who are new to Drum Country. Its links and site specific information are intended to help newcomers find services necessary to make the transition to Drum Country an easy one. Still evolving as queries are received, we will continue to tweak the site and pass along the best information available. Ultimately we'd like to see DrumCountry.com recognized as THE RESOURCE for help with local needs and information.

Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO)

Not a task force, but a partner organization, the FDRLO is working with FDRHPO on two projects. The first, an assessment of the region's emergency medical response delivery system with recommendations to enhance that system, is already underway. An RFP has been let and proposals evaluated. A contract will be issued shortly. The second project involves securing an experienced grant writer to assist FDRHPO with an application to the FCC for a Rural Communities Grant. If awarded, the grant funds will be used to link Samaritan Medical Center, Carthage Area Hospital, Lewis County General Hospital, E. J. Noble Hospital, River Hospital, Jefferson County Public Health, North Country Children's Clinic, and Fort Drum MEDDAC through a fiber optic channel. This will create a real time broadband connection for the sharing of vital medical information of all forms between all entities as may be necessary.

Invisible Growth

Since December 2003, the soldier population assigned to Fort Drum has risen from 10,729 to 18,111 as reported by MG Freakley at the February FDRLO meeting. That's a 69% jump in soldiers alone.

Many North Country residents will find that very difficult to believe. Many of these soldiers have spent very little time here. What time they did have here was spent training and preparing for deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq. The growth at Drum has been, for many, invisible.

This immediate deployment impacted the arrival of military families too. Faced with immediate and long term separation from their loved ones, many opted not to relocate, not to disrupt their children's education, not to try to find a new job in a new community. Now their soldier is coming home, home to Ft Drum, and they are looking forward to being together again.

In mid-December as we hurried and scurried around putting the finishing touches on holiday purchases and plans, MG Benjamin Freakley spoke to a group of community leaders via video teleconference. He reminded everyone that his troops – our 10th Mountain soldiers – would be spending the holidays away from home and preparing to return to the North Country from Afghanistan. More than six thousand soldiers – 6,291 to be exact – were due home by the end of March.

Plans changed in mid-January when DoD announced that 3200 soldiers from the 10th would extend their deployments in Afghanistan for an additional four months. Our hearts go out to these families. We have welcomed 3000 soldiers back and by mid-May nearly 6300 soldiers will have returned to the North Country from Afghanistan. In addition, we will welcome home a BCT (3000+ soldiers) from Iraq.

What impact will this have on the local community? Where will they live? Where will they shop? Where will they send their children to school?

FDRLO and others have been addressing these very questions over the past months – determining the housing need, assisting developers to move worthy projects forward, helping school districts to predict the student population impacts.

And now it's our turn – our turn to smile and welcome these soldiers and their families home, home to Drum Country. Let's highlight what I've learned from 3 dozen years as a North Country resident - the best part of living in Northern New York is its people. Do your part to demonstrate why we say, weather aside, it's

The Warmest Place You'll Ever Live.

Kathleen Mastellon, Administrative Assistant, FDRLO

NEW ROTARY PURPLE HEART SCHOLARSHIP FUND RAFFLE

The Watertown Rotary Club has announced a new raffle to raise funds for the Rotary Purple Heart Scholarship Fund. This permanent endowment provides educational assistance to 10th Mountain Division soldiers who have been awarded the Purple Heart and to their family members.

DEALMAKER AUTO GROUP is, once again, the primary sponsor and will provide a **2007 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited** for the raffle. This year, the Rotary Club will add a second prize of a **42 inch plasma HD TV**, and a third prize of **\$1000.00 cash**. Tickets will cost \$10.00 or 3 for \$25.00. Tickets will be on sale throughout the year at major events in the tri-county area with the drawing scheduled for October 17, 2007.

To date, four scholarships have been awarded to 10th Mountain Division soldiers who were wounded in combat operations. One of those recipients, former Sergeant Daniel Stevens, a Biomedical engineering student at Clarkson

University, in a recent letter to the Rotary Club said, "The scholarship made a huge difference in the first month, allowing me to stay focused on my studies."

Rotary Purple Heart Scholarship Committee chair Terrence Roche told us that "the number of 10th Mountain soldiers earning Purple Hearts continues to grow, and the scholarship fund must also continue to grow to meet their needs. This raffle is our primary means of growing the fund."



See page 7 for related story on number of 10th Mountain Division soldiers who have received Purple Hearts as part of CJTF76.

From Carl's Perspective

Wasn't this a nice compact little winter? The week before Christmas, we were still wearing light jackets outside. There were fears that we wouldn't have a maple syrup season as it was too warm for the sap to run. Snow blowers weren't moving at the big box stores. Tug Hill establishments missed their snowmobiler friends and customers. It was too warm to even make "snow" at the area ski hills. Ice fishing wasn't even on the horizon as the water of that big wide open Great Lake was well above freezing. Then, with barely a warning, instant winter was upon us. Nice cold temperatures, plenty of snow, and bodies of water of every size frozen solid and deep.

It was unfortunate this "little winter" we experienced coincided with the return of thousands of 10th Mountain Division soldiers from Afghanistan. Not necessarily the most welcoming weather for a homecoming. But no matter the weather, it was good to see them home.

Regrettably, not all who were scheduled to end their deployment in Afghanistan did so. As a national priority, ours and Afghanistan, it was determined that the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's tour was to be extended by 4 months. No matter how short or mild this winter, that seemed to extend it. One consolation however is that when they do come home, we will be just ending one of our fantastic Drum Country springs and starting another magnificent summer.



Welcoming Daddy Home
Photo by Christy Wirtz
submitted to
www.drumcountry.com

That's sweet reward.

So as we await the 3rd BCT's return, what do we see ahead? The RCI project on base reports approximately 80 occupied homes as of early March. Completing a new housing unit at the rate of about one a day, we'll probably see another 80+ homes added to that inventory by the time 3rd BCT comes home. Off base we'll see the start of two new projects at Eagle Ridge (town of LeRay) and Summit Wood (town and City of Watertown). These two projects will add 500+ units of housing to the regional inventory. Based on



Winter at Drum
Photo by
Melissa Klotz
Submitted to
www.DrumCountry.com

continued private sector development in Jefferson County, we can, in that time frame, anticipate another 100 units of single family homes. Lewis and St. Lawrence counties will also add to the total inventory of available homes. This is good. Lots of additional housing will be required as we see these and other soldiers end their deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It will probably be awhile before we see all of the 10th Mountain Division soldiers home as a division. Just as some soldiers return to Drum Country, others are scheduled to deploy to those critical locations. The cycle of deployments for now will continue.

There are other cycles of note we should mention. The turnover of the division's leadership is once again at hand. Change-of-command, the well understood part of military tradition and assignment, is still somewhat foreign to many in the local community. Brigadier General Terry, Assistant Division Commander for Operations, has already departed for his new assignment in Texas, before having the chance to enjoy all of this year's "little winter." Major General Freakley, Commanding General, his wife Susan, and their boys will also be leaving soon for a new assignment in Virginia. As I understand it, much of the senior command group will be looking to new assignments as we transition from winter to spring. It seems we just get to know these great folks and their spouses when they're off to a new assignment. We hope they recall fondly their time spent in Drum Country.

We look forward to offering a warm Drum Country welcome to the new Command Team, lead by BG (P) Michael Oakes. We trust they will soon understand this is truly "the warmest place you'll ever live."

Carl McLaughlin
Executive Director, FDRLO

In his address to community leaders in mid-December, MG Freakley shared the following data on awards presented to 10th Mountain Division soldiers participating in CJTF76:

Bronze Star Medal with Valor - 22
Army Commendation Medal with Valor - 9
Purple Hearts - 203
Combat Infantry Badge - 937
Combat Medical Badge - 70
Combat Action Badge - 1894



Bronze Star Medal

Established by order of the President on 04 FEB 1944, awarded to personnel of the US Armed Forces, who on or after 07 DEC 1941, distinguished themselves: "For Heroic or Meritorious Achievement of Service, not involving aerial flight, in connection with Operations Against an Opposing Armed Force." A Bronze "V" device is worn to denote Valor/Heroism.

The Purple Heart

Originally established by Commander-in-Chief George Washington on August 7, 1782, at Newburgh on the Hudson, New York, as an award for outstanding military merit, or the 'Badge of Merit'. The award was in the form of an embroidered, heart-shaped badge of purple cloth and bestowed on only three non-commissioned officers.

Though never officially abolished it was not again awarded for almost one hundred and fifty years. Upon its revival in 1932, as the Purple Heart medal, the new decoration was to be awarded in two categories:

- "For being wounded in action in any war or campaign under conditions which entitle the wearing of a wound chevron."
- "For those persons who perform any singularly meritorious act of extraordinary fidelity or essential service."

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an Executive Order which provided that the Purple Heart would be made available to members of all the US Armed Services who were wounded in action. Since then the Purple Heart has become one of the most highly respected decorations of the US Armed Forces. The decoration holds a very unique position in that it can be earned in only one way, by being wounded. An attendant requirement is that the wound must have been received as a direct result of enemy actions.

These explanations will help our civilian members to better understand the significance of these awards.

The Army Commendation Medal

Originally established by the Secretary of War as a ribbon-only award in 1945, the medal was added in 1949. Awarded to members of the US Army, on or after 07 DEC 1941, "For Heroism, Meritorious Achievement, or Meritorious Service". A Bronze "V" device is worn to denote Valor/Heroism in Combat.

The **Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB)** is an award of the United States Army which is presented to those officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers, in the grade of Colonel and below, who participate in active ground combat while assigned as a member of an infantry or special forces unit, brigade or smaller size, during any period subsequent to December 6, 1941. The Combat Infantryman Badge is easily one of the most recognizable Army badges and is considered a "badge of honor" in that those who are awarded the decoration have participated in direct combat with an enemy force.

A **Combat Medical Badge** also exists for those medical personnel who serve in front line combat medic roles.

In 2005, the **Combat Action Badge** was created to recognize service in combat by those Army personnel who would not otherwise qualify for the Combat Infantryman Badge.

FORT DRUM REGIONAL LIAISON ORGANIZATION

P. O. Box 775
Watertown, New York 13601

Phone: 315-836-1531
Fax: 315-836-1532
Email:office@fdrlo.org

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Young Professionals Summit Affirms Importance of Fort Drum to Region

On Friday, October 20, 2006, the first summit for young professionals from across the region, *EMERGE NNY*, was held at the Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay. The half-day summit was organized as a forum to encourage young professionals to share ideas and to take an active role in shaping the future of our region. Despite the early October snow storm, over 175 people attended the event.

EMERGE NNY kicked-off with Doreen Garrett, president of Otis Technology, in Lyons Falls. Her comments on leadership and on the strength of our communities set the tone for the day. Participants then had the opportunity to attend 3 of 9 exciting sessions ranging from business opportunities associated with the expansion at Fort Drum to the development of downtowns. The event wrapped-up with a town hall session that was moderated by Dr. Richard Halpin, executive director for the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County. The town hall session provided an opportunity for participants to rate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of our region.

Participants resoundingly agreed that our area's quality of life and sense of community were our greatest strengths. The economic and social impact of Fort Drum was also a clear strength of our region. In fact, the loss of Fort Drum was considered the area's greatest threat. Participants also agreed that our abundant natural resources, educational systems, and the quality of our workforce were also significant assets. Participants also felt that there was a need to invest in these assets as well.

There was overwhelming agreement among participants that area leaders should focus on community planning and development. And, greater emphasis should be put on marketing the area's natural resources as a means for tourism. Participants also stressed the need for quality housing.

Over the past two months, the steering committee for *EMERGE NNY* has met to discuss the results of a survey that was conducted at the close of the event. The results of the survey were to be announced to the public in early February. The steering committee has invited those who attended *EMERGE NNY* to participate in a planning session to lay the groundwork for task groups to be formed and projects to be identified. One of the projects already identified is the *EMERGE NNY 2007* event!

The Greater Watertown Jaycees a professional organization for persons aged 39 and below, has taken a proactive role in addressing comments by participants at *EMERGE*. The Jaycees have developed a professional speakers' series and revamped its networking events, aptly titled Go JC (Jefferson County). All events are open to the public and young professionals are especially encouraged to participate. Employers are also encouraged to promote attendance at these professional development events to their employees. Visit www.watertownjaycees.org for more information.

The *EMERGE NNY* steering committee would like to thank the FDRLO for their participation and sponsorship of this event. We look forward to partnering with you on future projects.

Michelle Capone,
Co-Chair, *EMERGE*♦*NNY* Steering Committee