

COMMUNITY CORNER

Families, Soldiers urged to prepare now for severe weather

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

You may have heard the saying that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb or vice versa. It's time to get ready for severe weather in Kansas.

I am asking for your participation in Kansas Severe Weather Awareness Week from March 7 to 11. The annual statewide tornado drill will be at 1:30 p.m. March 8. Test tornado warnings will be issued via National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System for distribution statewide.

For all of you new to Kansas, spring and summer severe weather can occur with little to no notice.

In 2010, the havoc caused

by tornadoes was surpassed by severe thunderstorms with winds measured at more than 125 mph, hail larger than grapefruit and several flash floods.

Kansas experienced 88 tornadoes last year – 28 more than the average of 60 per year. Severe weather events in 2010 caused more than \$220 million in damage to homes, property and infrastructure throughout the state.

Short of hurricanes, we experience all of Mother Nature here in Kansas. Army installations are not immune to natural hazards.

Fort Riley experienced flash flooding during June of last year, and more recently, Dec.



Col. Brown

31, 2010, an EF-3 tornado destroyed 23 homes and damaged several buildings and vehicles at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

We have spent more than \$900,000 in the past two years installing 20 additional Giant Voice Notification Towers and two additional tornado sirens at Fort Riley. But, this is only one piece of the mass notification system.

Tornado sirens and the Giant Voice system are not designed to be heard inside homes. Redundant alert and notification systems are paramount to your Family's safety.

Register your Family for AtHoc test and e-mail messaging at one of the five locations listed below or from any network computer on Fort Riley.

AtHoc registration kiosks locations:

- 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Replacement Co., Building 208
- In-processing, Building 210
- ID Card Center, Building 212
- SRP Site, Building 7673
- ACS, Building 7264

And finally, invest in a NOAA Weather Alert Radio for your home. Radios are available at the Post Exchange, as well as several local stores for less than \$40. For more information, go to www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/nwrcvr.htm.

Kansas Severe Weather Awareness Week is the ideal time for Families to make sure they are prepared. Develop a plan and practice it.

Everyone should know what to do when severe weather strikes when they are at home, work, school, out-

doors or other public locations they frequent.

Families should develop a safety plan for times when they are participating in outdoor recreation activities, sporting events or working outdoors.

To develop a Family disaster plan, learn about the hazards in your area. The Ready Army program provides information and resources to help Army Families, civilians and contractors prepare for severe weather. Ready Army encourages all of us to "Get a Kit, Make a Plan and Be Informed." Visit Fort Riley's Ready Army site at www.riley.army.mil/UnitPage.asp?unit=ReadyArmy.

Additionally, the state of Kansas has a website for severe weather preparedness at www.ksearay.gov.

At Fort Riley, we test the Giant Voice system and tornado sirens at noon every

Friday, excluding days of expected severe weather. If you hear the emergency warning signal or siren at any other time, seek shelter immediately and tune in to Riley TV cable Channel 2 on post or one of the following local radio stations: Junction City, KJCK AM 1420 and KJCK FM 97.5; Manhattan, KMAN AM 1350, KMKF FM 101.5 and KQLA FM 104.0; or these VHF frequencies: Abilene, WXL-71 162.525 MHz; Topeka, WXX 91 162.475 MHz; or Hallstead, KGG 98 162.425 MHz for updates and area-specific information.

Please prepare now to keep your Family safe.

If you would like to comment on this article, or suggest a topic to be covered in the Community Corner, e-mail riley.post.newspaper@com.us.army.mil.

Soldiers, Families encouraged to donate blood during March

Editor's Note: In honor of American Red Cross Month in March, the post will highlight services offered by the Red Cross. This is the first in a three-part series.

By Katherine Rosario
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Fort Riley is celebrating Red Cross Month in March with its theme "Join the Red Cross" by encouraging everyone who is able to donate blood.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the month of March as Red Cross Month to recognize the organization's efforts after it raised about \$146 million to support the war effort during World War II, according to the American Red Cross website.

Each year since, presidents have issued the same proclamation to honor the organization.

In the organization's honor this year, children are invited to submit individual works of art that support the month's theme for a chance to have their artwork displayed on Red Cross social media pages.

Entries will be accepted in four different age-based categories: Elementary and middle school, high school, college

and young professionals.

"The designs in each category should be aimed at inspiring young people who are in that category," said Helen Woods, American Red Cross assistant station manager for Fort Riley.

To enter and view contest rules, visit www.redcrossyouth.org.

Adults are encouraged to volunteer at blood drives, become an American Red Cross instructor or donate blood, Woods said.

Although most people associate the American Red Cross with blood donations, Woods said the organization also provides community services that help the needy, support and comfort Soldiers and their Families, provide educational programs that promote health and safety and assist in international relief and development programs.

"More than half a million volunteers assist the Red Cross annually through more than 700 locally supported chapters," she said, adding the American Red Cross trains about 15 million people each year in its instructional classes to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

The American Red Cross also is the link back home for

deployed military members, enabling their Families to communicate with them during emergencies, Woods said. It provides social services, emergency travel, financial assistance and mental health support for returning troops and their Families.

"The Fort Riley (American) Red Cross acts as the connection between Soldiers and their Families during an emergency," she said.

Woods meets with units on post before they deploy to give them information regarding the American Red Cross's military assistance programs.

"All the Soldiers receive a booklet to give to Family members with important (American) Red Cross numbers to call if there is an emergency," she said.

The goal, Woods said, is to equip Soldiers and Families with the necessary tools to contact each other if an emergency should occur.

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C., May 21, 1881, with the mission to be a neutral humanitarian organization led by volunteers who provide relief to victims of disasters. For more information, visit www.redcross.org or call Woods at 785-239-1887.

Eyster Pool to host Spring Fling

By Katherine Rosario
1ST INF. DIV. POST

To help kick off spring, the Eyster pool staff will host a weeklong spring fling party March 21 to 25.

The pool, located in Building 8069 on Custer Hill, has different themes for each day and provides prizes and snacks throughout the event.

Different themes include pirate, carnival, dragon, princess and beach party themes.

The cost per Family – in-

mediate-Family only – for the whole week is \$15. Daily passes can be purchased for \$7.50 per Family or \$5 per individual. The cost includes prizes and a snack and drink every day.

Doors open at 1 p.m., and the party runs each day until 4 p.m. Adults and children can stay for open swim from 4 to 6 p.m. by showing their military or DoD ID card.

"This is a great Family event since the kids are out of school for spring break," said Meghan McFee, recreation as-

sistant. "It gives the kids something to do and gets them out of the house."

Everyone will leave with a prize, which will be based on the theme of the day, she said.

"This is a great time for everybody. We have activities for children and adults, and it's a great opportunity to get the house during spring break," McFee said.

For more information, call 785-236-9441.



Shandi Dix | POST
Jefferson Elementary School first-grader Genevieve Perruccio receives her award for the Military Saves coloring contest from William Brooks, manager, Fort Riley Armed Forces Bank, center, during a ceremony Feb. 23 at the school, while Jefferson principal Vern Steffens, left, and Victoria Tidwell, assistant ATM specialist, Armed Forces Bank, right, look on.

Students learn to save money during 'Military Saves' week

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

"It's never too early to save," said Vern Steffens, principal at Jefferson Elementary School.

Saving money was the theme across the nation during the annual Department of Defense Military Saves Campaign, Feb. 21 to 27 on military installations.

"It's part of 'America Saves,' which really tries to get people to save money and for investing," said Victoria Tidwell, assistant ATM specialist, Armed Forces Bank. "It really tries to get them to set aside money instead of living pay check to pay check or living in debt using credit."

"We try to go out as far as we can reach to talk to all those individuals about savings – the importance of savings," said William Brooks, manager, Fort Riley branch Armed Forces Bank.

Jefferson and Ware elemen-

tary schools participated in the event at Fort Riley.

Students in kindergarten through second grade participated in a coloring contest, and third- through fifth-graders participated in a writing contest about what they were going to save money for.

The younger students colored pictures of a dollar bill and piggy banks, drew what they were going to save money for and how they were going to save money, Tidwell said.

All students also filled out pledge cards saying they would save money. From these pledges, names were drawn for a prize.

Winners at Jefferson for the coloring contest were second-grader Symphanie Sampson, first place; kindergartner Isaiah Contreras, second place; and first-grader Genevieve Perruccio, third place. Writing contest winners were fourth-grader Roman Montes, first place; fifth-grader Caden Clouse,

second place; and third-grader Ashly Meyer, third place.

During a ceremony Feb. 27 at the school, each winning student received a \$50 savings bond from a local bank and a gift bag. Sampson also won a \$25 gift card to the Commissary.

Winning the pledge card drawing and receiving a \$20 AAFES gift card were third-grader Kylee Welton and fifth-grader Mechayla Robinson.

Winners for the contests at Ware Elementary School will be recognized during an assembly at 2:45 p.m. March 18.

A book will be created containing all of the writing contest entries and the winning coloring contest entry as the cover for each school.

Throughout the week, local bank branches conducted promotional events to help Soldiers and Families learn to save money.

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