

Fort Hood wins Keep Texas Beautiful Award

By Christine Luciano

The Fort Hood Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division has won third place in the 2009 Keep Texas Beautiful Government Military Award project category. The honor recognizes the efforts of the environmental division to enhance its community and protect the Texas environment.

The Government Award is one of nine categories in the Keep Texas Beautiful Awards and recognizes outstanding contributions by government entities supporting the mission of Keep Texas Beautiful in their local communities.

“The Environmental Division has many programs that focus on enhancing mission readiness and environmental excellence on the installation,” Steve Burrow, chief, Environmental Programs said. “We take advantage of opportunities to educate and engage Soldiers and their Families to take responsibility for improving their community and serving as environmental stewards.”

Each year, Keep Texas Beautiful acknowledges deserving senior citizens, community groups, individuals, civic organizations, media, government entities and law enforcement officials for their commitment to litter prevention and cleanup, illegal dumping enforcement, education and publicity of environmental issues and community beautification.

Among some of the 2008 accomplishments were the Household Hazardous Waste and Bulk Recycle event, Earth Day Spectacular, Pollution Prevention Week, America Recycles Day, Fort Hood Recycle and Classification Unit services, and Environmental Compliance Assessment team. The Environmental Division also worked with many local organizations, civic clubs, and businesses to collaborate together on a variety of environmental events.

To support litter prevention and solid waste management, the Environmental Division offers free services to Soldiers and civilians on Fort Hood to recycle their products and properly dispose of household hazardous waste and electronic waste. Encouraging Fort Hood residents to think green, the Environmental Division partnered with Fort Hood Family Housing and Fort Hood Recycle to host the Household Hazardous Waste and Bulk Recycle event. The community helped divert truckloads of electronic waste and household hazardous products, more than 500 tires from ending up in the landfill, collect approximately 3060 pounds of scrap metal and 200 pounds from tires with rims, undamaged batteries, and other recyclables.

America Recycles Day is another annual environmental event that supported environmental education and community and improvement. With the theme ‘it all comes back to you,’ the Recycle Center hosted an open house, paid \$1 a pound for 1,765 pounds of aluminum cans, reached out to more than 1,400 sixth grades at a Go Green event. The Fort Hood Recycle Center is the largest recycle facility in the Army.

Through education and outreach, the Recycle Center increases the amount of materials recycled to include all paper, plastics 1-7, cardboard, metal cans, aluminum, toner cartridges, and scrap metal. In 2008, the Recycle Center processed 12.9 million pounds of recyclable material. Each year the money generated from recycling goes back into the Fort Hood community to support events like Freedom Fest, Month of the Military Child, Earth Fest, and welcome home ceremonies.

“Fort Hood has a sustainable mindset that supports the Army's mission, today, while preparing for tomorrow's challenges,” Burrow said. “Together we help make the green Army stay green.”

Fort Hood and the winners of the Keep Texas Beautiful award were recognized during the 42nd Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference, June 8-11, 2009, in Houston.

Keep Texas Beautiful, a statewide grassroots environmental and community improvement nonprofit, strives to educate and engage Texans to take responsibility for improving their community environment. KTB and its more than 360 affiliates work with government, businesses, civic groups, and volunteers to ensure that every Texan has the opportunity to make Texas the cleanest, most beautiful state in the nation. For more information on programs and events, call 1-800-CLEAN-TX or visit www.ktb.org.