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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



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Farmers' market season closes with festival

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Fort Leonard Wood hosted its sixth and final farmers' market of 2015, held next to the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Rec Plex Friday. The event featured a harvest festival to close out the season.

"Our first market was in May of this year and we've had one monthly since," said Samantha Kramer, a Pulaski County Sheltered Workshop representative who manages the market. "In May, we had five vendors, we currently have 11, and have had up to 13."

With increased vendors the market has seen the crowds grow.

"As the market manager, I am available to all vendors during market and I take care of customer questions and inquiries along with running PCSW's market booth," Kramer said. "At several markets we've handed out in excess of 300 market bags with promotional materials and flyers so I can confidently say we frequently hit that number."

The market featured local farmers, some of which are active duty or retired service members, as well as an educational booth by the Pulaski County Master Gardeners.

"Master Gardeners is all about education," said Gloria Bransdor, treasurer and a master gardener with the program. "We do a lot of educating on composting and how to grow in Missouri. Many people don't know how to grow here because they are from (another part of the country.)"

Many residents take advantage of the farmers' market while stationed on Fort Leonard Wood.

"My wife and I like to come to the farmers' market ... it's a regular thing we do," said Capt. Cameron Lothridge, a student at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence Chemical,

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Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Career Course. "Sometimes at the store you'll pay \$7 for an organic pepper, but when you come to the farmers' market, it's 50 cents. You are supporting local people. You can see where the food is coming from and get talk to them about how they raise food."

One patron said it's always better to buy from the grower if you can.

"It's really nice to have access to the local grass-fed beef and other proteins. I have been to every one of the farmers' markets that they have had, and I really enjoy the vendors," said Isabel King Lambert of Waynesville. "I love when you can get the goat's cheese and (it's) always nice to have different options."

Kramer said she is excited about next year and thankful for the community involvement.

"Some of the vendors and I have really grown to love the Fort Leonard Wood community," Kramer said. "I feel really lucky to have spent so many hours with the Families and people from post giving them something they deserve -- healthy, local food from their neighbors. This first market season was totally worth any stress, the long hours and even the hurdles I occasionally encountered."

Kramer encouraged patrons who have enjoyed this year's farmers' market to let Fort Leonard Wood officials know, and can specifically use the ICE Program to submit all comments. Next year's farmers' market schedule dates include:

-- April 29

-- May 13

-- June 3 and 17

-- July 1 and 15

-- Aug. 5 and 19

-- Sept. 2 and 16

-- Oct. 17 and 21

For more information, go to www.pcswfarmersmarket.com. You can also find information on Facebook, by calling 573.765.2500 or emailing eating.green@pcsw.org.

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For more information on this story, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

Encl. (1) Photo

Photo Cutline: Judy Harmon, left, Tricia Littleton, center, and Heather Williams, right, all contractors with Colorado State University , Center for Environmental Management for Military Lands, ask 8-year-old Musashi Reyes questions about recycling.

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting a colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
