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



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Post to kick off holidays with ‘12 Days of Christmas’

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Fort Leonard Wood’s annual tree-lighting event is designed to have something to help anyone get into the holiday spirit, from festive lights and live music to arts and crafts — and even a visit from Santa.

This year’s celebration is called “12 Days of Christmas,” and the public is invited to join the festivities scheduled from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Joint Services Park, located on the corner of Constitution and North Dakota avenues.”

“At 5:30, we’ll start the tree lighting ceremony,” said Eli Wilson with Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Community Activities. “There will be a variety of things happening, including some singing by the (School Age Services) choir, and a couple of songs by the 399th Army Band brass quintet.

Typically, the (commanding general) or his designated representative will have some words of cheer for the holiday season and a safety message. Then we flip the switch, light the big tree, and that kicks off the rest of the activities.”

Wilson said a majority of activities will take place in FMWR's activity tent.

“Our theme is the ‘12 Days of Christmas,’ and everything will revolve around that theme — we’ll have all the days represented,” Wilson said.

However, a few of this year's activities are mobile.

“We have a train that we’re calling the ‘Pear Tree Express,’ which represents the first day of Christmas,” Wilson said. “We are also doing something different this year by offering horse-drawn wagon rides. We’ll be able to load participants into the horse-drawn wagon, and we’ll have lighted trees on the route, one for each of the 12 days. So, it will be like going on a ride through the ‘12 Days of Christmas.’”

A centerpiece of the annual celebration is the arrival of Santa Claus, who will be available for photos.

“Santa’s arrival is also during the 5:30 to 6 p.m. ceremony,” Wilson said. “Usually, we will have a five-minute block, where he arrives, waves and goes into the tent, where he and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos.”

Units, groups and organizations that are taking part in this year's Operation Christmas Card contest will also have their 4-by-4-foot holiday cards on display.

“Those are our cards to the community. We judge the cards, select a best-in-show and leave them up until after the first of the year,” Wilson said.

The “12 Days of Christmas” event is free.

For more information, call 596.6913 or visit fortleonardwoodmwr.com.

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Story by Matt Decker, Guidon Leisure/Sports editor

http://www.myguidon.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16651&Itemid=41

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 80-90,000 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, one of only five reception stations in the Army, and the Army's largest Non Commissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. 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.

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