

Va. Guard switches on Fort Pickett solar array

Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, turned the switch to send power from the newly-constructed solar array to the administrative and classroom facilities April 30, 2015, at the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute at Fort Pickett, Va.

The ceremony marks completion of the Virginia Guard's first alternative energy project and highlights its commitment to sustainable an energy security.

"We have a tremendous partnership here at Fort Pickett with our Facilities Management Office, the garrison leadership, our tenant units and corporate partners to take bold steps forward in developing energy independence," Williams said. "The Virginia National Guard continues to demonstrate its leadership in sustainable energy programs across the National Guard, and we will continue to look at innovative ways we can take advantage of the latest technologies to continue to move the program forward."

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/03/7378/>



Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, prepares to symbolically turn the switch to send power from the solar array to the administrative and classroom facilities at the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Gate City-based detachment named top unit in Va. Army Guard

Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, presented the Eisenhower Trophy to the Gate City-based Headquarters Detachment, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group, as the top company-level unit in the Virginia Army National Guard April 25, 2015, in Roanoke, Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/27/7363/>

Commonwealth Challenge continues changing lives one cadet at a time

Cadets in Class 43 of the Virginia Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy have completed their two-week acclimation phase and are now focused on the academic portion of the program, with their eyes on graduation Aug. 22. There are currently 117 cadets in the program in two male platoons and one female platoon.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/21/7315/>

Va. Guard Soldiers gain valuable experience while assigned to JNGAU

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Norfolk-based Joint National Guard Augmentation Unit, 91st Troop Command, receive a unique opportunity to work alongside other services and train with joint commands during their tour. Virginia Guard Soldiers assigned to JNGAU are split between two organizations.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/06/7376/>

Soldiers from 529th CSSB return to Virginia after federal deployment

The last group of Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group reunited with family, friends and fellow Soldiers in Virginia April 29, 2015, after serving on federal active duty in Kuwait since July 2014.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/30/7357/>

Mark Your Calendars!

2015 Joint Military Spouse Appreciation Night

The event will be held Thursday, May 12, 2015, from 5 - 8 p.m. at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, 1600 Coliseum Center in Hampton, Va. The theme for the event is "Evening Under the Stars."

Admission is free and the event is open to all spouses of active duty, Reserve, Guard or retired members from every branch of service. Local vendors providing massages, community resources, arts and crafts, beauty consultations and more will also be in attendance.

For more information, call (757) 764-3990.

VDF keeps traffic moving at Apple Blossom Festival

Members of the Virginia Defense Force operated traffic control points and provided mission command support May 1-2, 2015, at the 88th Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Va. In addition to providing a valuable service to their community, it also provided the VDF with an opportunity to train on multiple communication systems and rehearse procedures they would use if called to state active duty to assist the Virginia National Guard.

Nearly 90 members of the all-volunteer VDF from units across the state augmented local law enforcement to help ensure traffic flow for the races and parades on Friday and Saturday.

“We love having the Virginia Defense Force out here, and we could not make this big event happen without them,” said Winchester Chief of Police Kevin Sanzenbacher. “These people are amazing because they are out there all day, on their feet, directing traffic and you never hear any complaints.”

The Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival is a series of more than 30 events held from April 24 to May 3 in Winchester and Frederick County and includes band competitions, dances, parades and a 10K race. Crowds in excess of 250,000 attend the festival annually.

Sanzenbacher explained that the VDF operated almost all the traffic control points for the one mile kids race and Firefighters' Parade, as well as the 10K race and Grand Feature Parade in order to ensure vehicle traffic didn't impede race or parade routes.

He and other Winchester officials commended the VDF on their professionalism and expressed appreciation for the VDF's support during the planning phases and the festival itself.

“This is a great chance to get out into the public and tell our story,” said Brig. Gen. (Va.) Justin Carlitti, commander of the VDF. “Our members come from the community, so this is a great recruiting opportunity for us as well. People see us out there helping out and ask how they can join.”

The VDF is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs reporting to the Adjutant General of Virginia. The members of the VDF volunteer their time for training and are only paid when called to state active duty by an authorization from the Governor of Virginia.

“We are very fortunate to have our state defense force in Virginia, because not every state has one,” said Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. “The opportunity to use this organization to get out and help in our communities is a tremendous thing.”

Members of the VDF perform a similar function for the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond when they volunteer their time to assist with traffic control during Memorial Day and Veterans Day events.

Planning for this year's support to the festival began in June of last year, said Lt. Col. (Va.) Williams Robbins, commander of the VDF's Winchester-based 3rd Regiment. Robbins also served as the commander for Task Force Shenandoah, the overall mission command organization for VDF personnel on duty for the mission.



A member of the Virginia Defense Force operates traffic control points and provides mission command support May 1, 2015, at the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Va.

The VDF has developed robust interoperable communications capabilities in recent years, and it deployed those capabilities during the Apple Blossom Festival. Robbins said this enabled them to test their systems in a real-world environment and see what works, what doesn't and how to improve.

Robbins explained that the traffic control point mission in Winchester supports the VDF's access control mission that is part of the Virginia National Guard's civil support task list, so it is a valuable training opportunity as well as service to the community.

“I am extremely proud of the great work the VDF has done to support the Winchester community,” Williams said. “They are a vital part of the Virginia National Guard's response capability.”

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/06/7386/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Lynchburg battalion builds solid UAS program

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/05/7366/>

Recruiter wins competition, earns “Golden Ticket”

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/05/7369/>

Photos: JFHQ conducts Soldier Readiness Weekend

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157651942218967/>

Photos: Aviators train with fire-fighting water bucket

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157651939549369/>

Photos: Pickett marks Earth Day with reservoir cleanup

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Photos: AG recognizes VDF NCO of the Year

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