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Idaho National Guard improves Morale Welfare and Recreation program

By Maj Chris Borders

Since April 1, the Idaho National Guard has been making steady progress toward a more economically viable and sustainable MWR program.

This could not come at a better time as the Idaho National Guard continues to face constrained budgets and resources.

“The first step in this process was to ensure all legal and financial instruments were in place to properly administer the program,” Col. Thomas Rasmussen, Deputy U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer for the Idaho National Guard said. Rasmussen also serves as chairman of the Idaho National Guard’s MWR program.

To kick-start the streamlining process, the program received over \$100,000 from the Gowen Field Recycling Fund and another \$60,000 in AAFES contributions. A portion of these funds went toward supporting bar and food service operations as well as the new gym.

The food and beverage service, the events/catering program, the Gowen Field RV Park and the Air National Guard’s storage lot all play a key role in promising a stable and sustainable future by generating a steady source of revenue.

This, coupled with hiring a new food and beverage manager, Ms. Janice



Clockwise: The bar at Gowen Field, Gowen Field RV Park, Gowen Field Mobilization and Activities Center and the Gowen Field Fitness Center. Photos by Maj. Chris Borders

Elliot, who has implemented a number of cost controls and best management practices all place the MWR program in a good position to launch future ventures.

“Our next endeavor is a mornings-only higher-end coffee shop to be located in the west bar, which will also serve breakfast burritos from the kitchen. Depending on the response, we may turn this into a drive-thru,” Rasmussen said.

Rasmussen’s staff is also working on setting up a facility in the Orchard Combat Training Center south of Gowen to support personnel while in the field. The plan also includes continuing gym support and upkeep operations.

“My appreciation goes out to the Recycle Fund chaired by Col. Michael Etcheverry; thanks to Construction Facility Management Officer Lt. Col. Farrin Schwartz, who has been and will be a tremendous force multiplier in our program; and many thanks to Maj. Chris Titus who has taken the bull by the horns on this program and made it work. Without her energy and commitment, none of this would have happened,” Rasmussen said.

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