

# Fort Stewart wins \$1 million, Communities of Excellence Award

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By J.D. Leipold



Photo credit J.D. Leipold

*Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli presents Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield Garrison Commander Col. Todd A. Buchs with a trophy for taking the gold in the Army Communities of Excellence Awards held at the Pentagon, May 5. Fort Stewart also received a \$1 million prize to go toward more facilities and services.*

*WASHINGTON (Army News Service, May 5, 2009) - Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., were presented their fourth gold Army Communities of Excellence Award along with a grand prize check for \$1 million at a Pentagon ceremony today hosted by Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli and Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management Lt. Gen. Robert Wilson. The ACOE Awards honor the top Army, National Guard and Reserve installations which have achieved levels of excellence in building a high-quality environment, outstanding*

facilities and superior services. During a year-long process, applicants are evaluated against Army priorities and the Malcolm Baldrige national quality criteria. Winning commands receive cash awards to go toward more facilities and services as well as trophies and a commemorative flag.

In remarks to the packed Pentagon auditorium, Chiarelli praised Soldiers and Army families for the resiliency they've shown over the last several years of conflict and applauded commanders for creating "welcoming, supportive communities that encourage and nurture closeness." "Unlike in the past, more and more spouses are choosing to stay in the area, continue their jobs and keep the kids enrolled in local schools during periods of separation. They consider whatever camp, post or station they live at... home," he said.

"Much of the credit belongs with the installation leadership and the many people within our military communities as well as those in surrounding communities who have consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure Soldiers and families feel at home," he added. Gold winner Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield Garrison Commander Col. Todd A. Buchs said after winning the award in 2004, 2005 and 2006 Fort Stewart was required to sit out for two years, but that didn't stop the command from moving forward with community improvements.

"This award wasn't so much about winning, it's what it means to our Soldiers and families and wanting to be the best for them," he said. "What better way than to have \$1 million to make more improvements that the community decides on." Fort Bragg, N.C., and Fort Meade, Md., shared second-place silvers, winning \$500,000 each. Army Garrison Daegu and Camp Humphreys, both in Korea, shared third-place bronze awards winning \$250,000.

"This award really has to do with the civilian workforce and how they care for families and Soldiers," said Col. Dave Fox, Fort Bragg's garrison commander. "Fort Bragg has won this award 12 times, but there's no resting; we've continued to build on the programs." Army Garrison Schinnen, Netherlands; Fort Campbell, Ky., and Fort McCoy, Wis., shared the most-improved category, each winning \$200,000. Special category awards of \$750,000 each were garnered by the Ohio Army National Guard and the Army Reserve 96th Regional Readiness Command, Fort Douglas, Utah.