

Glendale-Peoria Today

300 attend meeting to support Luke mission

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Steve Yamamori of Fighter County Partnership acknowledged he was “speaking to the choir” when he gave a Luke Forward presentation at the start of the Sun Village Community Association meeting Thursday.

About 300 residents of the retirement community in Surprise attended, many of whom raised their hands when asked to indicate their status as veterans.

Yamamori gave residents an overview of the need for the communities surrounding Luke Air Force Base to be vocal in their support of the base being selected as home for the new F-35 aircrafts.

F-16s are being phased out of the Air Force, he said, which puts the mission of Luke in jeopardy, since it’s the training base for F-16 pilots.

“If we don’t get a new mission (at Luke), it will have a devastating impact on property values and occupancy,” Yamamori said.

Luke is one of a handful of bases being considered for the F-35s.

As part of the selection process, for the next 18 to 24 months, a third party will conduct an environmental impact survey to study the noise, particulates, existing contours, sound corridors and quality of life for the base and surrounding areas, Yamamori said.

Beginning in January there will be a series of scoping meetings, he said, which will be when the community should come out to ask questions and voice concerns.

“El Mirage has some objections to the process,” Yamamori said. “So we invite El Mirage to come and lay their cards out on the table.”

Yamamori encouraged residents to sign up to show their support on Lukeforward.com, which had 10,000 registered supporters as of last week.

“We also need businesses, associations and mom-and-pop shops to send in their letters of support, which we can post on the Web site,” Yamamori said.

After the presentation, Myrna Holsinger said she supported bringing the F-35s to Luke. “I love the sound of the jets,” Holsinger said. “I feel safe here.” Bettie and Ed Wright also supported the F-35s. “We are for it,” Ed Wright said.