

Arizona mayors pass resolution in support of military installations

By CAROLYN DRYER
EDITOR

More than 90 mayors from cities and towns across Arizona passed a resolution submitted by the cities of Peoria and Yuma, in support of the state's military installations during the League of Arizona Cities and Towns conference held in Tucson last week. The resolution will be presented to the state Legislature along with a request for the state's lawmaking body and the governor to "continue their support of policies that strengthen the mission viability of Arizona's military installations."

John Schell, director of intergovernmental affairs for the City of Peoria, said El Mirage Mayor Fred Waterman asked to have an amendment to the resolution that would remove the words "future mission," but the 90-plus mayors declined his request.

Glendale Vice Mayor Manny Martinez commented on Waterman's attempt at amending the resolution: "I didn't agree with Mayor Waterman's amendment and that the resolutions committee had done its due diligence and we should not support the amendment and leave it as it is."

Cited in the resolutions was language that the mayors said would "continue activities at the state level that enhance the mission viability of Arizona's military installations."

The resolution also referred to the military industry as a "key component" of local, regional and state economies.

There are five major

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military installations across Arizona: Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, Luke Air Force Base, Yuma Army Proving Grounds and Marine Corp Air Station - Yuma.

The resolution also stated: "Arizona has long been considered a model state for how it has passed laws to protect the missions of its military installations throughout the years ...

"The effect of this resolution would be to encourage state lawmakers to stand behind these protections and improve upon them whenever possible, especially those that may arise from future mission requirements. It is especially important that state and local leaders not take steps that could weaken protections or programs already in place should these come under challenge due to alternative interpretation of state statutes or as a result of pressures from incompatible development."

As to the military installations' relevance to municipal policy, the resolution stated: "Military bases in Arizona exert a profoundly positive social and economic impact on local governments throughout the state. At Luke Air Force Base alone, Base personnel volunteered over 100,000 hours in the community and entertained over 200,000 visitors for

open house visits during 2007. Supporting the statutory protections and programs of Arizona's military also helps to strengthen the operations of our state's military bases. In this manner, we protect a constant and stable revenue source that stands impervious to fluctuations or downturns in the economy ..."

A state-funded study was released July 21, 2008 in Tucson, entitled "Economic Impact of Arizona's Principal Military Operations - 2008," the resolution cited. In that report, the economic contributions of Arizona's major military installations were detailed.

The report stated: "Arizona's military operations are increasingly important to the state's economy, creating and supporting tens of thousands of jobs and generating more than \$9 billion in revenue every year."

Report writers said the report "examines the impact of the facilities themselves as well as other economic activity generated by their presence."

The report continued: "The military, like other industry sectors in our economy, contracts for services and spends for operations, which is another key part of our state's economy. This generates private sector jobs while adding \$401 million in tax payments that keep our communities and state moving forward, "

Glendale's Community Weekly



50¢

September 10, 2009



www.glendalestar.com

Vol. 63 No. 37

The **Glendale Star**