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El Mirage resident rallies support for Luke

By CAROLYN DRYER
EDITOR

Lana Mook lives in the same subdivision, Pueblo El Mirage Golf Resort, as El Mirage Mayor Fred Waterman. But their opinions about Luke Air Force Base are worlds apart.

Mook said she moved here 25 years ago with my first husband. She recently retired (November 2006) and moved to El Mirage.

"My dad and brother were in the service," she said. "My niece came to live with us in high school. She wanted to be a pilot. She is a senior now at the Air Force Academy and she earned a pilot's spot.

"I am just very disturbed by what I see in the news in El Mirage politically, so I decided to research it."

She went to the El Mirage City Council meeting Aug. 27 and spoke during the public comments section.

"I had prepared a three-minute speech and I got up there and I said my piece" Monk said.

In her comments, Mook talked about her conversations with 50 other El Mirage residents "who are concerned about the direction the council has taken regarding Luke Air Force Base. I understand the need for El Mirage to be proactive in developing methods of increasing city income, what you have been doing does not represent me or the other residents I know."

Mook said the city's actions have "alienated the entire West Valley and El Mirage has become a laughingstock to the rest of the state."

Mook added, "You are jeopardizing the viability and future productivity of Luke AFB, which contributes over \$2 billion a year to this state's economy. A huge number of snowbirds come to our area because it is close to Luke. They utilize the

base for health care, prescriptions, commissary, optical and dental services, not to mention stores, churches, gas, banking, credit union and even such minor services such as haircuts. There are lots of other places outside of Arizona they could chose to go if Luke ceased to exist or significantly decreased the benefits these retired military families are entitled to."

Last Friday during a phone interview, Mook said, "We are in direct line with Luke's runway, so we have a lot of aircraft landing because of the wind.

But I'm very, very concerned the fact there's a lot of misinformation about Luke and the F-35. And there's a lot of things being said about the F-35.

It's nonsense.

"I plan to do everything I can to spread the word for people wanting to learn what's going on

MORE LUKE ON A2



Photo by Carolyn Dryer

El Mirage resident Lana Mook, left, listens as Rusty Mitchell, director of the Community Initiatives Team at Luke Air Force Base, talks with El Mirage resident, retired Air Force Lt. Col. W.J. Palmer, following a public meeting held in the West Valley community.

LUKE: Takes fight to residents, From A1

out here. I'm going to do everything I can to stop these people."

Mook hosted a meeting Sept. 2 at Pueblo El Mirage's banquet room for the public to hear from Rusty Mitchell, director of the Community Initiatives Team at Luke AFB.

After giving an overview of Luke's mission, the number of personnel employed at the base and its economic impact on Arizona, Mitchell fielded questions from the approximately 100 people in the audience. Just one person

questioned the possible harmful auditory effect the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter could have on his child. Other than the father's comments, the majority of those in attendance asked how they could help support Luke.

Mitchell said the most important thing they could do is attend forums like the one Wednesday evening if Luke is selected as a bed-down base for the F-35. He said an environmental impact study would be conducted to measure support for Luke in that event.