



Emerald Coast Association of REALTORS®



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Realtors from Five Counties Come Together for Education Summit

(Emerald Coast, Fla) – Realtors from across five counties came together Tuesday, May 18, 2010 for the annual District 9 Educational Summit. This year's Summit focused on the current military installations along the Emerald Coast and the arrival of the F35 Joint Strike Fighter and the 7th Special Forces. Speakers from Escambia County to Walton County shared information with more than 200 Realtors about the military on the Emerald Coast.

Kay Rasmussen, Director of Defense and Economic Initiatives for the Economic Development Council for Okaloosa County educated Realtors about the economic contribution of the military on the Emerald Coast. In Okaloosa County, the military contributes to 75 percent of the economy. Across Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties, the military contributes 40 percent of the total economy. Eglin is the major employer for Okaloosa County with 23,000 active duty personnel and 7,700 civilian personnel and contributes approximately \$7 billion dollars annually to the economy.

Rasmussen also pointed out the economic ripple effect of the military in our area. Three hundred defense contractors in the tri-county area provide approximately 25,000 jobs. Also contributing to the area are approximately 80,000 retired military in Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties with an expected growth of 4,000 retired personnel every year. All of this is before the Joint Strike Fighter and the 7th Special Forces arrive.

The F35 Joint Strike Fighter will contribute over 1,500 military personnel, over \$375 million in military construction, and will have an economic impact of \$1,668.9 million between 2010 and 2016. The 7th Special Forces will create an annual economic impact of \$506.3 million by 2011 and a \$566.3 million annual impact by 2016. Twenty-two hundred military personnel will arrive between April and September 2011 as part of the 7th Special Forces.

SFC Curt Unterreiner with the 7th Special Forces Integration Team spoke to the Realtors about the soldiers coming to Eglin AFB. The soldiers are triple volunteers and are considered the "A Team." The 7th Special Forces work in counterterrorism, direct action, foreign internal defense, and special reconnaissance. According to SFC Unterreiner, the "meat and potatoes" of their work is unconventional warfare or guerilla warfare. "We go after the enemy wherever they're at. We do not hesitate," said SFC Unterreiner to resounding applause.



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Unterreiner dispelled a few myths while he had the opportunity. Most of the soldiers are not required to live within 60 minutes of where they work, and there will be no need for new jails once they arrive. If something happens at 4:00 a.m., it won't be a soldier with the 7th Special Forces. "But if we see something going down, we might just take care of it ourselves," said Unterreiner.

The speaker's for the District 9 Summit included Santa Rosa County Commissioner Gordon Goodin; Kay Rasmussen, Director of Defense & Economic Initiatives with the EDC for Okaloosa County; SFC Curt Unterreiner, 7th Special Forces Integration Team; Kathy Lawhon, Chief, Housing Flight, Eglin AFB; Wendell Davis, 2010 Florida Realtors President; Cindy Anderson with Team Santa Rosa and the Gulf Coast Aerospace Coalition; Toni Richardson, Director of Marketing and Communications, Vanderheyden, Inc.; and Nan Harper, 2010 Women's Council of Realtors State President.

This year's District 9 Summit was hosted by the Navarre Area Board of Realtors and was held at the Navarre Conference Center. District 9 covers Escambia to Bay counties and is comprised of the Pensacola Association of Realtors, the Santa Rosa County Board of Realtors, the Navarre Area Board of Realtors, the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, and the Bay County Association of Realtors.

The Emerald Coast Association of Realtors is a not-for-profit trade association with over 2300 members. The mission of the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors is to assist all members in promoting their success through education, marketing, and member services.

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