CFAY recycling programs save money, conserve natural resources

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East (NAVFAC FE) Public Works Department (PWD), on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), is doing its part to better the environment of our host country Japan.

According to PWD officials, PWD is doing this by its solid waste programs within the CFAY Qualified Recycling Program (QRP).

The recycling programs have resulted in an increase waste diversion rates to 68 percent, which is a 44 percent increase from 2007.

Prior to 2006, the QRP recycling programs previously controlled by the CFAY Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department, were focused on generating profits.

However when PWD assumed responsibility it changed the focus of the programs to solid waste diversion, and expanded them to include, papers, fabrics, used cooking oil, fuel oil, rechargeable batteries, stackable wood pallets, clean crating material and used tires.

One of the proactive approaches that PWD takes is on-site support for construction and demolition projects on board CFAY, which resulted in a reduction of disposal costs for local contractors. The decrease in costs to the contractors has in turn, increased savings for PWD and its customers.

However, all the programs are not geared toward commands and construction companies. Some of the implemented programs, such as curb-side collections and call-in services, allow the community members to be proactive participants in improving the environment.

"Our curb-side collections program and call-in services makes participation in our recycling program easier; and therefore, encourages greater participation," said CFAY PWD Recycling Branch Head Roy Ito. "This results in greater solid waste diversion rates and increased revenues for the QRP to support program expansion and funding for various types of projects eligible for QRP funds."

NAVFAC FE Environmental Division employee Lewis McLeod helps Japanese contractors unload scrap metal at the Qualified Recycling Program Office April 21. CFAY recycling programs are not only geared toward commands and construction companies, Some of the implemented programs, such as curb-side collections and call-in services, allow community members to be proactive participants in improving the environment.

The cub-side collection program is partially volunteer driven and allows PWD to collect segregated recyclables from seven different locations throughout CFAY.

In conjunction with the PWD programs, the CFAY Housing Services Center has created a Solid Waste Semi-Source Segregation Program for single family homes and multiplexes that encourage military housing residents to segregate waste into two categories, separated in green and blue containers and labeled combustible and noncombustible.

The recycling process runs deep as PWD tracks data via the CFAY Solid Waste Tonnage Report, which was created to support requests for data from Commander, Naval Installations Command. The data also helps in identifying new recycling opportunities.

The programs PWD has implemented have generated direct savings and revenues of $948,000 since fiscal year 2009.

The savings are expected to increase by reducing the amount of hazardous waste with an aerosol can depressurizing system, which is estimated to additionally save CFAY more than $13,000 annually.

However, the savings will not occur if the programs are not successful. In turn, the programs cannot be successful without collective consciousness and cooperation throughout the local community.

"At CFAY, recycling is an all hands effort. It reduces waste, prevents pollution and conserves natural resources," said CFAY Environmental Director Charles Schulz, in a recent article to Currents magazine. "Like our Japanese counterparts outside the fence, everyone is committed to recycling and reusing materials as much as possible."

Local Sailor teaches reading, writing Japanese

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Many newcomers to Yokosuka arrive feeling a sense of adventure, eager to take on new challenges in a foreign country. Many even set out to tackle the Japanese language, although most of us never make it past *konichiwa* (good afternoon) or *sayonara* (goodbye).

However, there is one Sailor on this base who is not only making real progress towards his goal of learning to read, write and speak Japanese fluently, he is also helping his shipmates and neighbors learn to do the same themselves. Electronics Technician 1st Class Charles Applin volunteers his afternoons at the Community Readiness Center sharing what he has learned and teaching residents how to write Japanese characters.

Applin arrived in Japan four years ago ready to begin learning Japanese. After initially trying a number of popular methods and courses to learn the language, he decided that he was going to have to change his way of thinking.

"I tried Rosetta Stone or 'Japanese for Busy People' and I realized quickly that kanji is going to be the problem," said Applin. "Part of it is, and it seems counterintuitive, is to break it apart. Break the language apart and learn in parts. Then you can strengthen your weaknesses and learn to handle all the [parts] together."

Applin turned to the "Remembering the Kanji" series of books by James Heisig to help him learn the more than 2,500 kanji characters he now knows. Heisig's method differs sharply from typical classroom techniques. Instead of relying entirely on rote memorization, Heisig teaches individuals to create mnemonic devices for each character. Creating a story for each kanji helps students learn more efficiently and quickly.

ET1 Charles Applin writes a kanji character on the whiteboard in his classroom at the Community Readiness Center during his Kanji class held Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Applin incorporates lessons he has learned while studying to help his students learn quickly and efficiently.

During his classes, Applin adopts Heisig's method to help students get a handle on the written language first; so that, students will have a stronger foundation to build upon when they begin learning to speak and interact with people in Japanese.

According to Applin, the first thing people need to get over when trying to learn Japanese, or any language, is the intimidation factor. He understands that with the sheer numbers and complexity of kanji characters, it can seem overwhelming. But he also believes that he has a way people can learn to write Japanese and learn to do it quickly.

"I try to tell [students], believe it or not this is structured. If you take this structure, as an adult mind, you can learn it very fast," said Applin. "You don't want to learn it as children by writing everything down 100 times. That is boring and we can do better."

The editor asks:

Did you know, the deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to Oct. 21, 2011? This extension allows those eligible more time to apply for the benefits they've earned under the program guidelines.

The deadline extension is included in Continuing Resolution H.R. 1473, signed by President Barack Obama April 15, providing funding for federal government operations through Oct. 21.

The RSLSP was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under stop loss authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of $500 for each full or partial month served in a stop loss status.

When RSLSP began Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for this benefit. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts during the past 18 months. These efforts including direct mail and engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue through Oct. 21.

Visit the website http://www.defense.gov/stoploss to apply or for more information.