7th Fleet Family Readiness Group hosts chili cook-off competition

Story and photo by MC3(SW) Brian Stone, Commander U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs

Commander U.S. 7th Fleet (C7F) Family Readiness Group (FRG) hosted a chili cook-off competition fundraiser here on board *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Oct. 21.

The winning chili chef, Herbet D. Dean, received a golden spoon from a panel of judges and his recipe will be submitted to become an official U.S. Navy chili recipe. If the recipe is accepted, culinary specialists across the fleet will be able to create and cook his award-winning recipe for years to come.

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Vincent Curci, assigned to U.S. 7th Fleet, won the "People's Choice" award.

Many high-profile guests attended the chili cook-off, which included C7F Vice Adm. Scott Van Buskirk; C7F Chief of Staff Capt. Charles Williams; and the 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* Commanding Officer Capt. Rudy Lupton.

"This is such a great event," said Van Buskirk. "We need to do this every week. That's an order!"

FRG is a support organization made up of family members of Sailors who volunteer their time to help other U.S. Navy families adjust to a new command.

"It's a family away from your family," said Cindy M. Lopez, FRG member and fundraiser organizer for the chili cook-off.

Barbara A. Pinckney, the FRG president, helped orchestrate the event and said the cook-off was a success.

"The FRG is a great way to be involved and have fun," said Pinckney. "It's very important for a command to have a strong FRG."

Proceeds from the event were estimated at $500, which will be used to purchase welcoming baskets for families of service members arriving in Yokosuka.

"If somebody walks up to give your family a welcoming basket, it sets the tone for your whole tour at the command," said Pinckney. "The FRG worked really hard to get the event together."

Many Sailors in attendance said they were impressed with the work the FRG members put into the event.

"It was amazing," said Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Danielle C. Rosetti. "It was a wonderful fundraiser and I'd love for them to do it again."

Commander U.S. 7th Fleet Vice Adm. Scott R. Van Buskirk talks with Sailors from *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) and U.S. 7th Fleet staff during a command chili cook-off Oct. 21. The command chili cook-off was sponsored by the Family Readiness Group and raised funds to purchase welcoming baskets for new families coming to Yokosuka.

The chili cook-off consisted of 21 different chilis and two different competitions.

"I felt great. Even though I didn't win, I still think my chili was the best," said Katie A. Holmes, a contestant and FRG member. "I thought it built great camaraderie. We brought the fleet together for a healthy competition."

Electronic Leave deadline for all shore commands approaching

By Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

According to Naval Administrative Message NAVADMIN 252/10, all shore commands will need to begin using the Electronic Leave (E-Leave) option available through the Electronic Service Record (ESR) to process leave requests Nov. 1.

In preparation, Sailors should take the time now to ensure they have access to their ESR self-service accounts, so they'll be prepared to submit E-Leave requests ahead of the deadline.

"Most Sailors currently have ESR self-service access, but 10 percent still lack a self-service account," said Senior Chief Personnel Specialist Lance A. Partain, assigned to the Personnel Service Delivery Transformation Office at the Bureau of Naval Personnel. "Routing a paper leave chit is becoming obsolete. Eventually, all Sailors will be required to use E-Leave, but make sure your shore Sailors have ESR self-service access now rather than waiting to the last minute. The bottom line is no ESR access, no E-Leave, no leave."

ESR self-service accounts are accessed online through the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) with a Common Access Card at https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil.

"It should take about five minutes to establish an ESR self-service account," said Art Tate, NSIPS/ESR implementation manager and fleet liaison. Tate advises Sailors with ESR or E-Leave issues to call the NSIPS help desk toll-free at (877) 589-5991 or e-mail nsipshelpdesk@navy.mil.

To learn more about ESR and other Navy Career Tools, visit the Sailor Career Toolbox page on the Navy Personnel Command website at http://www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/CareerToolbox/.

Enlisted Field Service Record closeout deadline extended

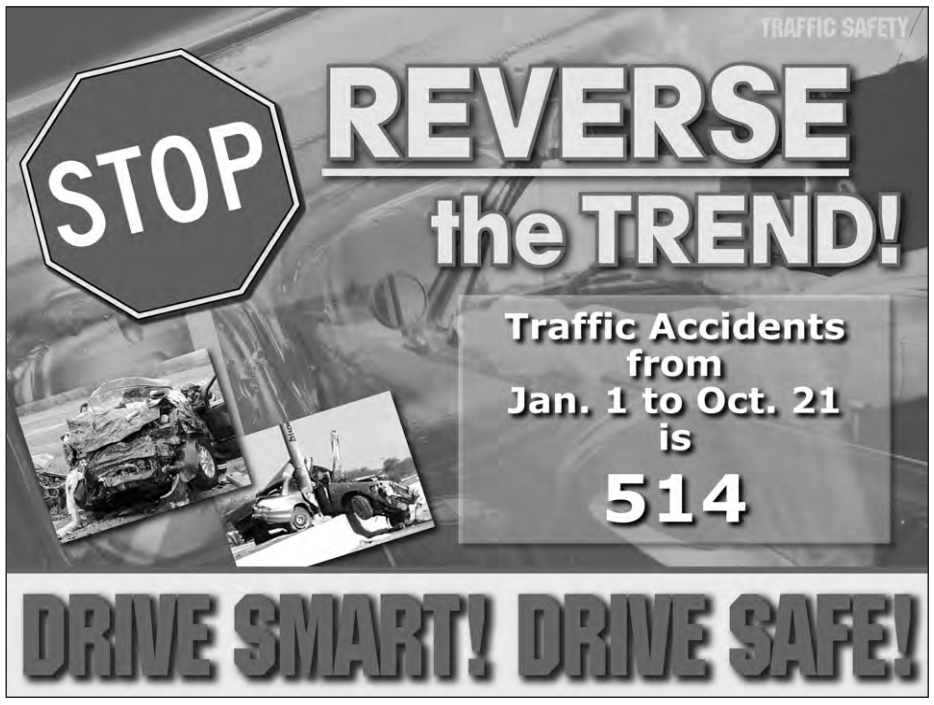
By Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

The deadline for closeout of the Enlisted Field Service Record (EFSR) has been extended to Dec. 30 for shore commands and Sept. 30, 2011, for aircraft carriers.

The original EFSR closeout was announced in NAVADMIN 040/10 with a deadline of Sept. 30.

"While we are close, approximately 74 percent, and good progress have been made, a delay in fielding the EFSR closeout application and Fleet resource challenges required to complete this effort have necessitated an extension of the deadline," said Jim Tanner, NPC assistant commander for Personnel Information Management.

The message directs commands to begin generating and maintaining service record information through a secure Internet connection with the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) Electronic Service Record (ESR) by the listed deadlines.

According to the NAVADMIN, the ESR allows for global transactions for medals and awards, training and education, personnel qualification standards, routine administrative remarks and creates electronic forms that can be printed and signed when a hard copy is required.

Once transitioned to the ESR, commands will still be required to maintain a smaller hard-copy file to support their associated programs. The documents maintained locally should include the Record of Emergency Data, Servicemember's Group Life Insurance, Security Clearance Eligibility Certification and Family Care plans.