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## Letterkenny Army Depot earns award for going green

By JIM HOOK Senior writer

GREENE TOWNSHIP -- Letterkenny Army Depot is shading the Army's olive drab to green.

The depot north of Chambersburg earned the Army's highest honor in environmental science and sustainability, the 2009 Army Environmental Award for Sustainability. Letterkenny recycled nearly three-fourths of its solid waste last year and tracked its water and natural gas consumption.

Tad Davis IV, deputy assistant secretary of the Army Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, on May 26 presented the award to Letterkenny Commander Col. Cheri A. Provancha.

"As the greatest, most powerful nation and Army in the world we have embraced the responsibility to balance our mission with our community and our environment -- our world," Provancha said. "Here at Letterkenny, we provide efficient and effective depot-level maintenance capabilities in compliance with the Army's strategy for the environment that centers on the motto 'Sustain the Mission-Secure the Future.'"

The award salutes an about-face for a depot that contaminated local groundwater in the 1960s with poor storage and disposal of degreasers. The Army today continues to spend millions to clean up the groundwater.

Letterkenny is meeting the targets of its sustainability plan that looks out 25 years.

Tom Lillie, the consulting fellow of the Army Environmental Policy Institute, said, "Letterkenny developed the most comprehensive sustainability program in the Army by installing meters to monitor electricity consumption, driving electric vehicles, adding solar panels and geothermal heating, replacing inefficient boilers and making a host of other improvements. Letterkenny is a model for sustainability."



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Letterkenny, Franklin County's largest employer, repairs missile systems and vehicles and stores ammunition for the military. Sustainability is the latest feather in the cap for a depot previously recognized for its manufacturing excellence.

Recycling was one of the goals in the depot's award-winning plan to conserve water and energy and to reduce pollution.

"In fiscal year 2009 we generated 9,450 tons of solid waste, of which 72 percent of that solid waste was recycled," said Glen Trego, deputy director of Public Works.

"By recycling, we saved \$643,815 in disposal costs," said Randall Quinn, chief of the Environmental Management Division.

The Public Works Department played an integral part in creating and initiating the plan.

Employees continue to develop ways to improve. The 2010 sustainability plan defined actions to sustain or expand the depot's mission, while safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment. It would:

- Establish a baseline for all water systems and conserve, reduce and recycle water for reuse.
- Develop and implement an energy conservation and reduction program to achieve energy sustainability and to supply all energy for depot operations from renewable resources by 2033.
- Divert 100 percent of solid and hazardous waste from landfills and incinerators by 2033.
- Eliminate the need for a Title V Air Quality Permit by 2018.

The plan is an integral part of the commander's strategic objective to become the Army's premier sustainable green depot.

To make its plan, the depot must uncover and track what had previously been the hidden costs of energy and water use. The depot has metered water at all of its buildings since the 1990s, and all new construction has been metered.

The depot has installed an additional 26 electric meters and five gas meters in 12 buildings, and a monitoring system to track and shift the demand for electricity to off-peak, lower-cost hours. The advanced metering

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system tracks 75 percent of the electricity used at the depot.

As of September 2009, the depot had 88 meters tracking 90 percent of electric costs and is on track to meet the Army's goal of having all buildings metered by the end of September 2013.

In the past two years, the depot moved to passive solar and geothermal heating and cooling funded by the Energy Conservation Investment Program. Letterkenny also has partnered with the National Defense Center for Energy and Environment to demonstrate emerging technologies in waste-to-energy conversion and methane gas recovery.

"As a depot that is always looking forward, there is nothing more rewarding than being recognized for our commitment to excellence," Provancha said. "Receiving the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award for Sustainability is an extreme honor."

An independent panel of judges made up of professionals from federal, state and Army organizations recommended Letterkenny for the award.

"The Army recognizes successes that demonstrate mission-driven solutions that protect the environment at installations here and overseas," Davis said. "Whatever we do needs to revolve around supporting the mission, taking care of our soldiers, civilians and families. In simplistic terms the Army, our Army, your Army -- is building green, buying green and going green. These winning environmental programs make the Army sustainable, thereby impacting generations to come."

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