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NCBC Gulfport hosts Law Enforcement Day with local government agencies

By Ryan Labadens
NCBC Public Affairs

Representatives from 10 Mississippi Gulf Coast law enforcement agencies met with officials and security members from Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Jan. 24, 2019, on what was the base's first ever Law Enforcement Day.

According to Ensign William Clark, NCBC Gulfport security officer, the purpose of Law Enforcement Day was to bring together representatives from various local law enforcement agencies to help foster relations and interagency partnerships.

"What we hope to accomplish is to be able to work together with local law enforcement agencies and learn about each other's tactics, techniques and procedures so that we can all be on the same page when it comes to how we respond to various situations that may arise," said Clark.

While here, the officials received briefings from Capt. William Whitmire, NCBC Gulfport commanding officer, and Ron Perry, NCBC Gulfport assistant security officer, regarding the partnerships they hoped to be able to forge among the law enforcement agencies. The visitors also toured the K9 kennel facility on base as well as the newly-completed scenario-based training facility.

The purpose of the new training facility is to provide law enforcement officers a place to practice responding to various incidents, such as active-shooter situations, so they can improve upon their tactics in an ever-changing environment.

"I think it's wonderful having the resources



Representatives from 10 Mississippi Gulf Coast law enforcement agencies met with officials and security members from Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., Jan. 24, 2019, on what was the base's first ever Law Enforcement Day. (U.S. Navy photos by Ryan Labadens/Released)

they have out here at the Seabee base with the new training building," said Billy Seal, chief of police for the Long Beach Police Department. "It's also a great benefit for different law enforcement agencies to be able to come together, work together and train together."

Police Chief Leonard Papania from the Gulfport Police Department also touted the benefits of joint training.

"Anytime you have joint training it helps prepare us for real-world events," said Papania. "When different agencies and jurisdictions come together, it broadens our scope and helps us all to work together better."

Cmdr. Ronald Jenkins, NCBC executive officer, noted how the Navy base continues to use events such as Law Enforcement Day to find new ways to engage with the community and other local government agencies.

"This event is just one example of how we at the Naval Construction Battalion Center seek to work with local government agencies so that we can continue to strengthen our ties with – and be better neighbors to – the surrounding community," said Jenkins.

The following are the 10 security and law enforcement agencies that participated in Law Enforcement Day at NCBC Gulfport: Bay St. Louis Police Department, Biloxi Police Department, Gulfport Police Department, Harrison County Sheriff's Office, Long Beach Police Department, Moss Point Police Department, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Ocean Springs Police Department, Pascagoula Police Department, and the 81st Security Forces Squadron from Keesler Air Force Base.



Navy Lodge celebrates 50 years of excellence



By MC3 Kohen Gillis
NCBC Public Affairs

The Gulfport-area Navy Lodge celebrated the organization's 50th anniversary with a cake-cutting ceremony on Jan. 11, 2019.

Founded in 1969, the Navy Lodge is the official lodging facility for Navy personnel traveling on government orders, as well as a cost effective alternative for customers who are authorized to patron the establishment. Navy Lodge has 33 locations that are used to service state-side naval bases as well as 7 locations outside the continental United States.

"Customer service is the number one thing I try to instill in the people who work here," said Janice Baker, general manager for the Gulfport Navy Lodge with 28 years of experience. "I believe our level of dedication to customer service is what sets us apart from other hotels."

The Gulfport Navy Lodge first opened its doors on Oct. 7, 1986 and offered 15 rooms. The branch opened its second building in 1999 and its third, and newest building in 2012. Boasting 80 available rooms, the branch is a sought-out accommodation for many in the Gulfport area.

"When you stay at Navy Lodge here, you just feel that there's something different about it," said Capt. William Whitmire, commanding officer of Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport. "It's a real privilege to have such an outstanding facility with an equally outstanding staff be a part of your command."

The Gulfport branch's newest building is a "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED)-certified building. LEED is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement. Projects pursuing LEED certification earn points across several categories, including energy use and air quality.

Vaping, smoking not allowed in unaccompanied housing or other DoD facilities

By Ryan Labadens
NCBC Public Affairs

Vaping has become a hot topic in recent years, especially when comparing it to cigarette smoking or use of other tobacco products. Despite any of the comparisons that can be made between these products, one area where there are no differences in the eyes of Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport is in the smoking of tobacco and use of vaping products inside buildings on base.

According to NCBCGPT Instruction 5100.38D, which lays out the Tobacco Policy for NCBC Gulfport, smoking of tobacco products – and use of vaping products, or Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) – is prohibited in all Department of Defense (DoD)-controlled buildings, facilities and vehicles on base.

These DoD buildings include unaccompanied base housing. Use of these products on base is only allowed in designated outdoor tobacco areas.

Jeff Snowden and Jack Healy, lead fire inspector and fire inspector for the NCBC Gulfport fire department, said there was a sharp rise in vaping-related false alarms in unaccompanied base housing over the holiday season in 2018.

"Vaping sets off the smoke detectors, just the same as regular smoke would do, and it registers at the fire station as an alarm," said Healy.

As such, the first responders don't have any clue whether or not they are responding to a false alarm in the middle of the night or an actual blaze.

"It creates a real problem because not only do we have a full crew of fire fighters and security personnel responding to a false alarm, but it takes away manpower during a time when they may need to be responding to an actual emergency," said Healy.

The NCBCGPT instruction lists ENDS as vapes, vaporizers, vape pens, hookah pens, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes or ecigs) and e-pipes, and Healy wanted to note that using tobacco and ENDS products in DoD facilities, and tampering with smoke detectors, are offenses punishable under the UCMJ for military members.

Leslie Schwartz, NCBC Gulfport unaccompanied housing general manager, noted that residents are required to sign documents acknowledging their understanding that smoking tobacco products and using ENDS are prohibited inside unaccompanied housing facilities.

"It's your choice, obviously, if you want to vape or use tobacco or any tobacco-related product – it's your health. But if you're going to use them, then you just have to follow the policy we have set for them," said Schwartz.



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