

**PATRON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2010**

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) Patron Council met in a general session September 29, 2010, in the Board Room, Defense Commissary Agency Headquarters, Fort Lee, Virginia. Attendees included Patron Council Members and designated participants below.

The following Patron Council members were present:

Col Cory Lyman, USAF	Office of the Secretary of Defense Reserve Component Representative
CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley (Ret)	Air Force Retiree & Family Matters Representative
Ms. Jennifer Kuhlman	Air National Guard Family Member Representative
COL John Radke, USA (Ret)	Army Retirement Services Representative
Mrs. Jenny Lee Jackson	Army Well-Being Representative
CSM Abe Vega	Sergeant Major of the Army Representative
Mrs. Ellen Lever	Army National Guard Family Member Representative
COL Peter J. Duffy, USA (Ret)	Army National Guard Retiree Representative
SGM Richard Anderson <i>SGM Anderson attended the meeting in place of SGM Lana Labay</i>	Army Senior Enlisted Representative
FORCM Stephen Markum	Navy Senior Enlisted Representative
Ms. Candace Currier	Overseas DoD Civilian Representative (Far East)

The following members of DeCA's leadership briefed the council:

Mr. Tom Milks	Acting Director
Mr. James Frost	Director of Corporate Communication
Mr. Chris Burns	Director of Sales
Mr. Jay Hudson	Director of Performance and Policy

A. Opening Comments.

Mr. Frost opened the session and welcomed attendees. He introduced the Acting Director, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, and those who would be presenting during the meeting. Discussions and comments are summarized below.

1. Acting Director: Mr. Milks briefed Patron Council members on DeCA's mission, vision, and goals. He then highlighted information about DeCA's leadership and

management. In his brief, he also discussed customer satisfaction and customer savings. Commissary operational efficiencies and comparison with commercial supermarket charts were provided for members of the council. Members also received an update on DeCA's Environmental Management Program and the Going Green campaign.

2. Director of Sales: Mr. Burns briefed Patron Council members on the Sales Directorate's mission. He used charts to compare trends and sales. Topics included in the presentation were fiscal year average index value, resale trends, coupons, commissary sales and customers for FY 1993-2009, and first quarter promotions.

3. Director of Performance and Policy: Mr. Hudson briefed Patron Council members on customer satisfaction and provided statistical data from previous years. He then highlighted the infrastructure for FY 2010-2011 current initiatives, to include the Commissary Gift Card Program and electronic shelf labels.

4. Director of Corporate Communication: Mr. Frost briefed the Patron Council on DeCA's new communication initiatives. A variety of topics were discussed during his presentation, including the Food for Thought Program (presented by Ms. Karen Hawkins, DeCA Dietitian), on-site sales and outreach (presented by Mr. Doug Hammer, Guard & Reserve Outreach Coordinator), the history of the commissary benefit (presented by Dr. Peter Skirbunt, DeCA Historian), social media (presented by Ms. Mildred Slamin, Public Affairs Specialist), and the Your Action Line (YAL) program (presented by Ms. Courtney Rogers, Customer Relations Specialist).

## B. Open Floor Suggestions.

*Please note: These are suggestions shared by Patron Council members during the course of the meeting. The directorate(s) noted on each line item will evaluate the suggestion and consider it for further action, but may determine some suggestions are already being pursued or should not be pursued; these suggestions are a starting point rather than a mandate.*

1. Business Cards: Patron Council members suggested that we design and provide business cards for their use. The cards would have their Patron Council information on the front, and Courtney Rogers' contact information on the back for any inquiries that need to be referred as Your Action Lines. **(Corporate Communication)**

2. Educating Patrons: Patron Council members suggested that we generate a way to educate patrons collectively as DeCA/Patron Council.

- Tool Packages: Members of the Council suggested that we put together a tool package of short messages to include videos and flyers for distribution. They also suggested that we keep it simple when creating these tools. Members want information they can share with patrons in a clear and concise format. **(Corporate Communication)**

3. Connect Messages to Campaigns: Patron Council members suggested that we connect our communication messages to the promotions that are going on in the commissary.

**(Corporate Communication and the Sales Directorate have already worked together to create a joint promotional calendar for the next year that links DeCA messages with industry promotions.)**

4. Veteran Center On-Site Van: Patron Council members suggested that we include visiting Veteran Center On-Site Vans in our outreach program. **(Corporate Communication)**

5. Get the First Lady Michelle Obama in Our Commissaries: Patron Council members suggested that we try to get Mrs. Obama to visit our commissaries to promote nutrition and to get more people into the commissary to help preserve the benefit. **(Corporate Communication)**

6. Bring Them Back Campaign: Patron Council members suggested that we create a campaign to bring eligible commissary shoppers back to the commissary; to promote a sense of community and shopping in a secure and safe environment. **(Corporate Communication)**

7. Emphasize Quality: Patron Council members suggested that we emphasize the quality of our products and facilities that create a great overall quality experience. **(Corporate Communication)**

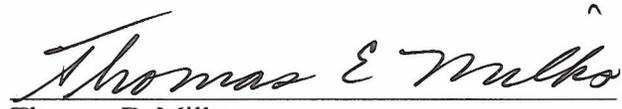
C. Questions and Answers.

The floor was opened for questions. Questions covered topics such as coupons, human resource servicing, quality of commissary products compared to other grocery chains, strategies for drawing more single soldiers and retirees into the commissaries, community support activities, the Food for Thought program, case lot and on-site sales, and DeCA's social media initiatives.

D. Closing Remarks.

Mr. Milks concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and participation and letting them know how valuable we consider their feedback, thoughts, and ideas. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. The next Patron Council meeting will be conducted FY 2011.

APPROVED:

  
Thomas E. Milks  
Acting Director, Defense Commissary Agency

11/2/10  
Date