



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Look for Earth-friendly items in 'Green' commissaries year-round

*By Tammy L. Moody,
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NOTE: For more information on DeCA's environmentally friendly initiatives, visit the agency's "Go Green" Web page at <http://www.commissaries.com/green/index.cfm>.

FORT LEE, Va. – Sen. Gaylord Nelson started a movement in the late 1960s that inspired millions of Americans to come together April 22, 1970, for the first Earth Day, a day when the nation observed environmental issues affecting our planet.

Now, 40 years later, the Defense Commissary Agency celebrates Earth Day, every day, with "green," earth-friendly products and stores.

DeCA identified "environmental responsibility" as a major priority in 2005, and that responsibility comes in many forms. Within the commissary for example, customers can find reusable, recyclable grocery bags, as well as an increased inventory of environmentally friendly products.

"At DeCA, we are proud to join the nation in observing Earth Day," said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. "But our emphasis on protecting the environment lasts year-round. We've already sold more than 3 million of those recyclable bags, and more people are using them every day."

Commissary shoppers also can find energy-saving, compact, fluorescent bulbs in the household goods aisle, and can stock up on green cleaning products that include floor and surface cleaners, laundry softeners, tissues and wipes.

The commissary's environmentally friendly products also include many food items, such as a wide range of organic items, including milk, baby food, and organic dog and cat foods. Throughout April many of these "green" items are being featured and have special pricing to celebrate Earth Day.

"Along with the types of products we sell, we also work continuously to cut energy costs and protect the environment by building energy-efficient stores, and monitoring and reducing energy consumption," Sakowitz added.

DeCA, like all federal agencies, has been tasked with reducing its energy consumption. Strategies such as heat reclaim systems, and refrigeration monitoring and control systems have been employed since the 1980s. In 2008, the agency introduced solar panels to its Los Angeles Commissary.

"Commercial grocery stores spend an average of 1.7 percent of sales on energy," said Boyce Bourland, chief of DeCA's facilities division. "In comparison, DeCA's energy cost is 0.9 percent of sales."

He explained that DeCA is exploring ways to reduce energy use even further. Little Creek Commissary at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., is a test site for several new strategies, including a "layered lighting" concept, introducing more natural light, LED display case lighting, enhanced freezer and cooler insulation, solar water heating for 30 percent of the demand and many more energy efficient ideas.

"We are committed to being an environmental leader in the food marketing industry throughout the year – not just on Earth Day," Sakowitz added. "Everyone benefits from these initiatives – customers, our installation partners, the Defense Commissary Agency, and most importantly, the environment."

-DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support*

element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.