



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Corporate Communication

1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

Release Number: 88-10
Date: September 16, 2010
Contact: Kevin Robinson, public affairs specialist
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773
E-mail: kevin.robinson@deca.mil

DeCA realigns marketing to add more synergy between communication and product support

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
DeCA public affairs specialist*

FORT LEE, Va. – Karen McComas, former liaison officer for the Defense Commissary Agency, is now chief of the strategic marketing division in the office of corporate communication. In conjunction with McComas’ move from the headquarters support office to corporate communication, Sallie Cauthers, previously chief of marketing since June 2007, was assigned to the sales directorate as a marketing and mass communication specialist.

Both moves, effective in late July, are expected to significantly increase the synergy between corporate communication and sales, said Chris Burns, director of sales. “Our staff will continue to work with industry partners to increase the effectiveness of our sales campaigns and special events,” he said. “This restructuring of our marketing effort will help stores by raising our ability to convince more customers to use their commissary benefit. In the process, we show the strength of the benefit through increased sales.”

Cauthers is now assigned to the special projects division in sales, where she will help create promotional programs that target select markets such as moms, single service members, members of the Guard and Reserve, and retirees that will help increase sales within specific categories.

McComas is now responsible for the global coordination of marketing programs with multiple agencies in the federal government. She supervises a team of marketing specialists in

graphics design, production and distribution of products that support marketing campaigns. The agency's outreach and customer relations functions also fall under her leadership.

The tie that binds communication, marketing and sales has just gotten stronger, said James Frost, director of corporate communication. In an age where information is only as strong as its ability to reach a select group, he is excited about the agency's enhanced focus on reaching more customers.

"Sallie is a creative talent who produced many outstanding campaigns for corporate communications," Frost said, "but we need her skills closer to the sales directorate to allow DeCA to achieve new levels of collaboration — a new age of working together that will drive the development and implementation of globally orchestrated marketing campaigns for years to come."

Frost said McComas brings extensive organizational and project management experience to corporate communication that spans various military and commercial lines. "Together, sales and corporate communication will reach more authorized customers by identifying specific target audiences and connecting them with product promotional cycles and marketing campaigns that add more value to the shopping experience."

McComas has more than 23 years of experience in the Department of Defense and is the spouse of a retired soldier. Before coming to DeCA in the spring of this year, she served as the Army Community Service officer at Fort Lee for nine years. There, she was instrumental in the post being recognized as the Army's best medium-sized ACS for fiscal 2009. While in this position she also was named the best ACS officer for the Army's Northeast Region.

McComas began her government career in 1987 as the family child care director at Nuremberg, Germany. From 1990 to 1998, she served in various assignments at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., progressing from family child care outreach coordinator to family member employment coordinator to training administrator.

Her government career also took her to Europe, where from 1998 to 2001, she managed two ACS centers for the 284th Base Support Battalion in Giessen, Germany.

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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 more than \$4,400 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.