NEWS RELEASE

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‘Your Commissary … It’s Worth the Trip!’

One word adds new twist to DeCA motto

By Courtney Rogers,
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FORT LEE, Va. – When it comes to the commissary benefit, one word can make a huge difference. That’s why the Defense Commissary Agency has updated its motto to read, “*Your* Commissary … It’s Worth the Trip!”

The agency hopes putting a new twist on its old motto will help commissaries worldwide build an even stronger connection with millions of authorized customers. The change is designed to enhance the way commissary customers feel about the value of their benefit with a clear message that confirms their ownership in it, said DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu.

“It may seem like a small change, but it’s a significant one because it makes our message more versatile,” Jeu said. “It allows us to promote all the different ways we work to make the commissary worth the trip for our customers – through superior savings, service, selection and facilities – under the umbrella of a single, more personalized motto.”

DeCA’s previous motto – “The Commissary – It’s Worth the Trip!” – had struck a resounding chord with customers. That motto was introduced by former DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., when he came on board in 2008. At the time, Sakowitz saw the message as a way to communicate to customers, both on and off the installation, that the savings they can enjoy at their commissaries make it worth the trip.

DeCA Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Thomas E. Milks sees huge value in the updated message and hopes it will resonate with customers that the benefit exists to help improve their quality of life.

"The truth is, saving money is a huge selling point for our customers, and it should be, because our mission is to sell quality groceries at cost, helping service members and retirees stretch their budgets through savings that can be worth thousands of dollars per year," Milks said. "But we also want to let our customers know that we never forget this is a benefit they've earned through their dedicated service to this nation."

Earlier in the year, when DeCA initially looked at ways to improve the motto, its corporate communications directorate asked commissary employees worldwide to contribute suggestions to leadership on how to update or replace it. Commissary employees offer a unique perspective into the benefit, stemming not only from their interactions with customers on a daily basis, but also from the fact that many commissary employees are customers themselves; 62.5 percent of DeCA's employees are military-related.

Employees were eager to contribute, and they stepped up to the challenge, submitting more than 1,000 suggestions in a month's time. "With my job, I thought it would be a great contribution to be able to have something that I made on the wall of every commissary," Camp Pendleton Commissary, Calif., store associate Latoya Dortch said. "The right slogan can drive customers into our stores to see what we have to offer, which is an amazing environment."

When DeCA leadership reviewed the employee submissions, a pattern emerged: Many of the suggestions referred to DeCA's stores as not just "The Commissary," but "Your Commissary" – appealing directly to customers by championing their ownership of the benefit, not only through their service, but also through their surcharge contributions, which help build and maintain commissaries around the world. They decided to update the motto to read, "Your Commissary … It's Worth the Trip!" to emphasize that DeCA's focus is to deliver a world-class benefit to each commissary customer every day.

DeCA is gradually transitioning to the new motto, so customers will see it used side-by-side with the previous motto until that motto is phased out. This plan will allow DeCA to personalize its message while leveraging its established branding, an approach that will help the agency connect with its customers, DeCA commissary management specialist Bruce Dubisar said.

"Branding is critical to success, especially when our customers have so many choices," said Dubisar, who submitted several motto suggestions. "It's important for DeCA's motto to be

something our customers can identify with, to make it clear that they're losing out on a benefit they've earned if they don't shop their commissary."

-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 amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit http://www.commissaries.com. 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.*