

A Publication of the McChord AFB Retiree Activities Office for Air Force Retirees, their spouses or survivors. Department of the Air Force, 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, Customer Service Mall Rm 1001, McChord AFB WA 98438-1114; Phone (253) 982-3214 (Voice Mail 24 hours a day) Fax 253-982-5234. Email - rao@mcchord.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

Joint base plans take shape Expert planners at McChord and Ft. Lewis are making strides towards the creation of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Congress mandated the creation of the base with the Base Realignment and Closure 2005 law, directing the creation of 12 joint bases out of what are currently 26 installations among all the military services; Joint-Base Lewis McChord will stand up in 2010.

Installation support functions of McChord Air Force Base will be realigned to Ft. Lewis, with the Army in the lead of installation management. "The driving force behind joint basing is to search for efficiencies and effectiveness in merging installation support functions between different services. In pursuit of these efficiencies, we're working closely with our Fort Lewis counterparts to identify commonalities in our support functions," said Col. Jeffrey Stephenson, 62nd Airlift Wing commander. Colonel Stephenson stressed that the operational missions of the two installations will remain distinct under the merger. Airfield operations are going to be managed by the 62nd AW's commander "on behalf of" the joint base commander.

Experts in 49 major support functions, such as housing, transportation logistics, and security services, are developing roadmaps that will combine to form a memorandum of agreement to be signed in September 2009 by the services' chiefs of staff. "It's important while we are working through these issues that we make sure the Army and the Air Force requirements can both be met," said Lt. Col. Anne Marie Scott, deputy director of joint basing for McChord. The joint base will begin merging in January 2010 (attaining Initial Operational Capability) and will finalize it in October 2010 (reaching Final Operational Capability). Once officially stood up, the joint base will support a population of more than 101,000 people and will manage more than 414,000 acres of land, including the Army's Yakima Training Center. In the meantime, base planners are striving to ensure that the transition to a joint base is transparent to local communities. "We want to make sure the transition is smooth for the Airmen, their families and everyone else who works on the base," said Col. Shane Hershman, the McChord lead for joint base planning.

The colonel admits that the creation of the joint base is a mammoth job. "We're going to have to work through any issues that come up," Colonel Hershman said. "It's a big task, but it is doable. McChord and Fort Lewis have found common ground before and we just have to keep working to do it again."

(Source: Compiled from Northwest Airlifter articles)

Medical Care for OEF-OIF Veterans: Combat veterans are eligible for free medical care from VA for most conditions for five years after they separate from active duty. VA is reaching out to veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) who have been discharged but have not contacted VA about their benefits. In addition to health care, other possible benefits include home loan guarantees, education, training and life insurance. If you are - or if you know - an OEF-OIF combat veteran who has not contacted VA to learn about these benefits, please contact your nearest VA facility .

(Source: Veterans Administration)

VA announces online claims applications: The Department of Veterans Affairs will now accept online applications from veterans, survivors and other claimants for various benefits without the additional requirement of submitting a signed paper copy of the application. People can now file initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits online. VA will process applications received through its online application Web site, VONAPP, without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications. VONAPP, found at www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery. Officials announced that VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The online application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more. More than 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA, and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program. For more information about VA benefits, go to VA's Web site at www.va.gov or call the toll-free number (800) 827-1000.

(Source: Veterans Administration)

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the South Puget Sound wants to thank you for your service to our country and your continued willingness to make a difference. Last year, the CFC of the South Puget Sound that services Pierce, Lewis, and Thurston counties, received over 8,000 donations totaling \$1,121,805 thanks to the generous spirit of military retirees such as you. Whether recently retired from the armed services or you have been for some time, you are able to participate during the campaign that runs October 1 through December 15 each year. Gifts from military retirees can be made by either check or cash and the CFC gives more than 2,000 choices of where you can choose to make a real difference in the lives of others – whether local, national, or international. By getting involved, you have the opportunity to make a difference and bring about change in our neighborhoods, our community, our country, our world, so that it is a better one for future generations and us. Tables will be setup at Fort Lewis and McChord AFB during the campaign (see below) where you can come by and donate to the organizations you wish to support. Alternatively, in October you can go to www.CFCgive.org and learn more about the campaign and search for charities online. If you have questions or wish to donate, please contact Sean Armentrout at 253-597-7488 to get more details, or write to CFC of South Puget Sound, 1501 Pacific Avenue, 4th Floor, Tacoma WA 98401.

FT LEWIS: Commissary on 31 October 2008 between 10:00am and 3:00pm

MCCHORD AFB: To be determined (check back at www.CFCgive.org in September)

Tricare Medicare reimbursement rates TRICARE assures providers and beneficiaries that the provider network will continue to be strong and growing as Congress passed legislation that maintains current Medicare reimbursement rates to healthcare providers. A decrease in Medicare reimbursement rates was originally scheduled to go into effect July 1, 2008. Because TRICARE reimbursement rates are tied by statute to Medicare, some beneficiaries have expressed concern that a rate decrease would have a negative impact on their access to providers. While maximum reimbursements rates are limited by law, regional contractors use incentives with proven results, such as good customer service, expedited payments and patient volume to encourage providers to join the TRICARE network. More than 325,000 providers are in the TRICARE network, with over a million providers accepting TRICARE beneficiaries. To find a list of Doctors in your area who accept Medicare/TRICARE patients go to www.medicare.gov/Physician/home.asp

(Source: TRICARE Pressroom)

How Tricare works when there are other insurance plans: The rules for filing Medicare and Tricare claims. The easiest rule is the Tricare rule, it never changes: Tricare is always the last payer as required by law. Claims must be filed with any and all other health plans first. These health plans must complete their processing and payment on a claim before the claim can be submitted to Tricare for its portion of the payment. Exceptions are only, in cases of welfare-related plans such as Medicaid. Tricare is the primary payer to that type of plan.

Tricare for Life is full coverage by Medicare Parts A and B, and full coverage by Tricare Standard. Medicare is the primary insurance for those beneficiaries. The filing order is simple and automatic. Your Medicare provider will start the process by filing a Medicare claim. When Medicare completes its action on the claim, it automatically forwards the claim to a Tricare contractor, who will process it as a Tricare Standard claim. That completes the process of the simplest form of Tricare for Life coverage.

The second rule is about Medicare's claim-filing order. This is part of the law that governs Medicare; it is not related to Tricare in any way. Any questions about Medicare rules must be addressed to Medicare officials. While a beneficiary continues to work for his employer who sponsors a health insurance plan, the employer's plan is first payer. When the beneficiary no longer works for the employer who provides the health insurance, Medicare becomes primary payer. However, even that needs to be verified with Medicare.

Here is the way other health insurance affects the Tricare portion of Tricare for Life. Again, the key is that Tricare will always be the last payer. If a Tricare for Life beneficiary has other health insurance, then that plan has to be second payer to Medicare, so that Tricare can continue to be last payer. When Medicare finishes processing a claim, it automatically forwards that claim to the health insurance plan that is second payer.

Again, Tricare must always be last; the second payer to Medicare is any other health insurance that you may have. You are responsible for telling your provider if you have any health plan in addition to Medicare and Tricare. This will affect which plan Medicare designates as the second payer.

Whenever Tricare is third payer, (last payer by law) you, the beneficiary, must file the Tricare claim after Medicare and any other health insurance plans are finished with it. Tricare will not accept a claim forwarded by any health insurance provider other than Medicare. If you have questions call your Tricare Service Center for instructions.

(Source: Navy Times)

Back Surgery TRICARE beneficiaries with pain from fractured vertebrae may rest assured that TRICARE "has your back." Percutaneous vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty, two minimally invasive back surgeries, both are now covered under TRICARE. Either may replace spinal fusion, an invasive surgical procedure, for treatment of fractured vertebrae. The policy change is retroactive to March 1, 2007. Usually occurring in patients with osteoporosis, many vertebral fractures will heal on their own in approximately three months with bed rest and anti-inflammatory medication. It is only when pain persists beyond three months that surgery is recommended. The traditional treatment was spinal fusion surgery which requires up to 12 hours in the operating room with days of hospitalization afterward. Percutaneous vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty are outpatient surgeries which have patients back to relative normality in 24 hours. Although minimally invasive, all surgeries come with risk, and decisions need to be discussed with your doctor. Approval must be obtained from a provider for either surgery. Beneficiaries with questions about this procedure and its coverage under TRICARE should contact their primary care manager. Check www.tricare.mil for this and other healthcare benefit information.

(Source: Tricare OSD.mil)

Program to Educate Vets on Suicide The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a pilot outreach program to encourage veterans to use the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if they need help. The pilot program will take place over a three-month period in the Washington, D.C. area. If the advertising program proves successful, the VA will consider extending it to other regions. For more information on veterans' benefits, visit the VA's website or call 1-800-827-1000.

VA Burial and Plot-Interment Allowances What Are VA Burial Allowances? VA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

- Who Is Eligible? You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:
- you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral, AND
- you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer, and
- the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- the veteran died because of a service-related disability, or
- the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, Or
- the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, or
- the veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, OR
- the veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, OR
- the veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death, OR
- the veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

How Much Does VA Pay?

Service-Related Death. VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. VA will pay up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

Non-service-Related Death. VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$150 for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed. You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Benefits. You should attach a copy of the veteran's military discharge document (DD 214 or equivalent), death certificate, funeral and burial bills. They should show that you have paid them in full. You may download the form at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

(Source: Department of Veterans Administration)

Study Links PTSD with Heart Disease: A new study has found that Vietnam veterans who experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were twice as likely to die from heart disease as veterans without PTSD. The study found that the more severe the PTSD diagnosis, the greater the likelihood of death from heart disease. The study was published in the July issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine*. An abstract of the study is available on the [Psychosomatic Medicine](#) website.

(Source: Center for Health Research)

Post-9/11 G.I Bill Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs officials are working out the details of a new education benefit recently approved by Congress that goes into effect Aug. 1, 2009. The new education bill, commonly called the Post-9/11 G.I Bill, will govern payment and reimbursement plans for veterans and servicemembers seeking to further their education. The new plan will be open to most servicemembers who served on active duty after Sept. 11, 2001. This includes people who were not eligible for the Montgomery G.I. Bill, such as Air Force Academy or ROTC graduates, those who declined to participate in the program, and those whose service started before it went into effect in 1985. The implementation of particular benefits and how they will apply to former and current servicemembers have yet to be established. There are, however, a few facts that are known since the bill was signed into law:

- **TUITION** -- The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will cover tuition with payments sent directly to the school. The formula for determining the amount of tuition and fees paid will be based on the highest cost of a state-supported bachelor's degree program.
- **HOUSING** -- A housing allowance will be made available to prior servicemembers who attend as civilian full-time students. The rate will be that of a staff sergeant with dependents.
- **BOOKS & SUPPLIES** -- A maximum of \$1,000 per year will be allotted to the member to cover the costs of books and supplies needed for classes. The stipend will be divided by terms. If someone attends a two-term school, the allotment will be \$500 per semester, whereas the student will receive \$333 if they attend a three-semester school.
- **TUTORING** -- \$100 a month for 12 months will be available for tutor programs should the servicemember require extra help outside of his or her studies.
- **AVAILABILITY** -- Servicemembers can take advantage of the program up to 15 years after they are honorably discharged or retire from the service.
- **CERTIFICATION** -- An extra \$2,000 is available to pay for one license or certification test as approved by the VA.

Besides the listed benefits, a portion of the tuition stipend, as well as the tutoring allowance, may be available for servicemembers to transfer to family members. Many of the details for this, however, are still being worked out between DOD and the VA. Also the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill tuition benefit will be available to most people while they are on active duty. For more information, visit the educational office on base or the VA web site for GI Bill, http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm (Source: Air Force Print News)

VA offers new online resource service: The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a new online service, My HealtheVet, which is a gateway to veteran health benefits and services. It provides access to: trusted health information; links to federal and VA benefits and resources; the Personal Health Journal; and online VA prescription refill service. In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view appointments, co-pay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records online. My HealtheVet is a powerful tool to help veterans better understand and manage their health, according to VA officials. The Web site also features a section called "Learn About" which provides resources on a variety of topics such as computers, the Internet, phishing scams and telephone scams. Health information from A to Z plus medical dictionaries, an encyclopedia, journals, and more will be available soon. To visit the My HealtheVet site, go to www.myhealth.va.gov/. (Source Veterans Administration)

Agent Orange Bill Introduced House Veterans' Affairs Committee recently announced the introduction of H.R. 6562, the Agent Orange Equity Act of 2008. The bill would restore equity to all Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Currently Vietnam veterans must prove "foot on land" to qualify for the presumption of service-connection for herbicide-exposure related illnesses. The Agent Orange Equity Act of 2008 is intended to clarify the law so that every servicemember awarded the Vietnam Service medal is fully covered by the comprehensive Agent Orange laws that Congress passed in 1991. The [text of the bill](#) is available online.

Agent Orange and Prostate Cancer Linked UC Davis Cancer Center physicians released research data showing that Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange have greatly increased risks of prostate cancer and even greater risks of getting the most aggressive form of the disease, compared to those who were not exposed. Based on medical evaluations conducted between 1998 and 2006 of 13,000 Vietnam veterans, twice as many veterans exposed to Agent Orange were identified with prostate cancer.

The findings will appear in the Sept. 15, 2008 issue of the *Journal of Cancer*. A copy of the study can be requested by e-mailing Amy Molnar at amolnar@wiley.com.

For more information on the UC Davis Cancer Center, [visit its website](#). [Read the article on Military.com](#).
(Source: *Military.com*)

National POW/MIA Recognition Day National POW/MIA Recognition Day is traditionally observed on the third Friday of September. This year, the day will be commemorated on Sept. 19, 2008. The theme for 2008 commemorates the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. POW/MIA Recognition Day posters can be ordered at the following website <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/Posterform.htm> or by calling 703-699-1131. For more information, visit the [Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office](#) website. By law, the black POW/MIA flag can be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations on that day.

RAO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Is the retired life slowly getting to you, do you need a little something extra to help fill your days? The McChord Retiree Activities Office is willing to help you out, we have an ongoing need for dedicated volunteers. The RAO desk is staffed by retiree volunteers and spouses. RAO hours of operations are 0900 to 1200 hours Monday - Friday. You can volunteer for one day a week, one day a month or more, the choice is yours. Volunteers answer the phones and do research to locate information for fellow retirees and their survivor's questions on subjects, such as Tricare, Tricare for Life, Delta Dental, Retiree Pay matters, and Veterans programs and more. Working at the RAO with fellow retirees is enjoyable work; it is a satisfying feeling knowing that you have helped a fellow or survivor with their questions or problems. It is also great to get together and rub elbows with your fellow retirees and their spouses all working together to help the local military retiree community. We host a business luncheon at the McChord Club on the second Tuesday of each month. Feel free to stop by and check us out or you can call us at (253) 982-3214 or e-mail us at rao@mcchord.af.mil.

McChord AFB Community Center Happenings

Phone 253 982-0718 / 0719

Base Theater Bldg 742 Col. Joe Jackson Bld Theater shows FREE movies at 4 & 7 pm on Saturdays and 4 pm on Sundays, popcorn and candy are available for purchase. For movie schedule call 253-982-5836.

Adult Guitar Lessons Classes are on Mondays for six weeks from 6:30 to 7 pm. Must be 18 yrs older or attend with a parent. Cost \$88 Call 253-982-0718 for more information.

Adult Piano Lessons Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday. Cost is \$15 per lesson. For more information email us www.mcchordafb.us.

Basic Digital Photography Workshop \$65 for one 4 hour workshop. Classes are offered on Tuesday from 5 to 9 pm, for more information email: www.mcchordafb.us.

Outdoor Movie Sept 26, Athletic Field Pavilion next to club start at 7 pm (free) refreshment will be provided.

Halo Tournament Oct 25, located in the surf spot at the club, registration starts at 11 am to 12:45 pm and the game will start at 1pm. (Refreshment will be provided by USO)

Jet City Improv October 24, starts at 7pm Base Theater. Cost is \$10.00 for the general public and \$8.00 for students and seniors. Our quick-witted professional work together to create a live comedy experience that is unique every time. Free refreshments will be provided by USO

(Source *McChord AFB Community Center*)

McCHORD TELEPHONE DIRECTORY		NATIONAL NUMBERS	
Airman & Family Readiness center	253 982-2695	Air Force Contact Center	1-800-616-3775
Air Terminal (PAX Svcs)	253 982-7259	Deers	1-800-538-9552
Armed Forces Bank	253 581-9272	Tricare Information	1-800-363-6337
Causality Assistance	253 982-3821	Tricare West Region	1-888-874-9378
Chaplin	253 982-5556	Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy	1-866-363-8667
Collocated Club	253 982-2795/5581	Delta Dental	1-888-838-8737
Commissary	253 982-3285/2740	Defense Finance & Accounting	1-800-321-1080
Credit Union	253 588-5843	Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Dental Clinic	253 982-5505	VA Benefits	1-800-827-1000
Eye Clinic	253 982-2273/2032	VA Insurance	1-800-669-8477
Exchange (BX)	253 582-3110	Air Force Billeting	1-888-235-6343
Finance Office	253 582-5156	Army Billeting	1-800-462-7691
Hospital Clinic (Family Practice)	253 982-5766	Navy Billeting	1-800-628-9466
ID Cards/Deers	253 982-2543/2544	Air Force Aid Society	1-800-769-8951
Legal Assistance	253 982-5512	Air Force Enlisted Village	1800-258-1413
Library	253 982-3454	Dragon Hill Seoul Korea	011-82-2-790-0016
Madigan Emergency Room	253 968-1390	New Sanno Hotel Tokyo	011-81-3-3440-7871
McChord Pharmacy	253 982-2273/2458	Hale Koa Hotel Hawaii	1-800367-6027
Public Affairs	253 982-5637	Shades of Green Fla.	1-888-593-2242
Retiree Activities Office	253 982-3214	Edelweiss Lodge Germany	011-49-8821-9440
Security Police	253 982-2779	Armed Forces Retirement Home	
Survivor Benefit Plan	253 982-3821	Washington Campus	1-800-422-9988
Telephone Locator	0/113	Gulfport Campus	1-228-604-2205
Visitors Center	253 982-2347		
Red Cross	253 982-5557/5778		



MCCHORD'S Retiree Edition RECYCLER

MCCHORD RECYCLES TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW ~ SEPTEMBER 2008

Wanted - Recyclers!

McChord's Recycling Program has added a new team member, the Public Recycling Container. You can find these new recycling containers at the following locations:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Holiday Park Camping | ¼ Mile Running Track | Hockey Rink |
| Holiday Park Pavilion | Baker Field | Ball Fields 1, 2, 3 & 4 |
| Rainier Field | St Helen's Field | Golf Course |

What items can you place in the Public Recycling Container?

Drink Containers



Aluminum & Tin Cans



Glass Bottles



Please Remove & Recycle Lids



Plastic Bottles

Drink Boxes



Milk Cartons

IMPORTANT RESOURCE!!! Keep this and all recycling handouts in a folder for new arrivals to read.

Federal Recycling Program  Printed on Recycled Paper

McChord's Recycler is a product of the Qualified Recycling Program (QRP) Committee:

Michael Grenko
Chief Environmental Management Flight

QRP Manager

Doug Skitch
Recycling Manager
Quality Assurance

Jim McCormick
Environmental Attorney

Contracting

Finance

Base Supply

Transportation

Services

AAFES

Commissary

J & M Recycling Inc.

The McChord Recycler is produced by the 62 CES/CEV Environmental FT

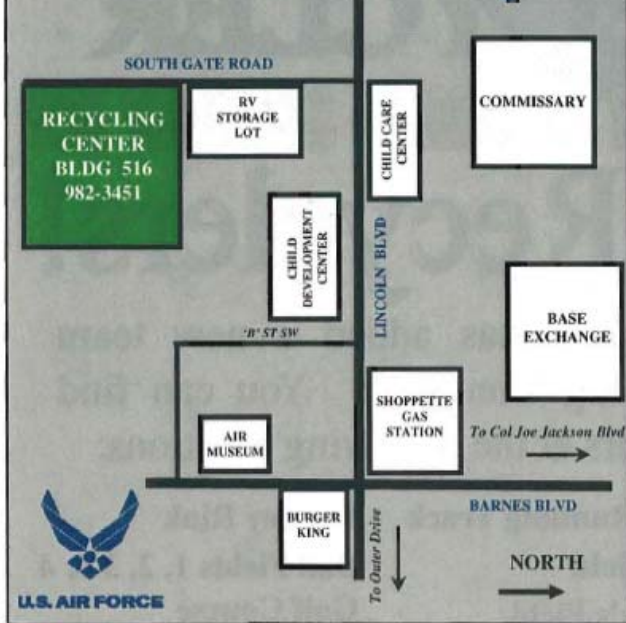
BASE RECYCLING CENTER
982-3451

BASE RECYCLING MANAGER
982-3913

Printed on Recycled Paper



Recycling Center Location Map



RECYCLING POINT MONITORS (RPM)

If your office's RPM has recently changed, please call the 62 CES/CEV staff at 982-3913 to update your primary and alternate RPM information.

Office Recycling Collection Point (RCP)



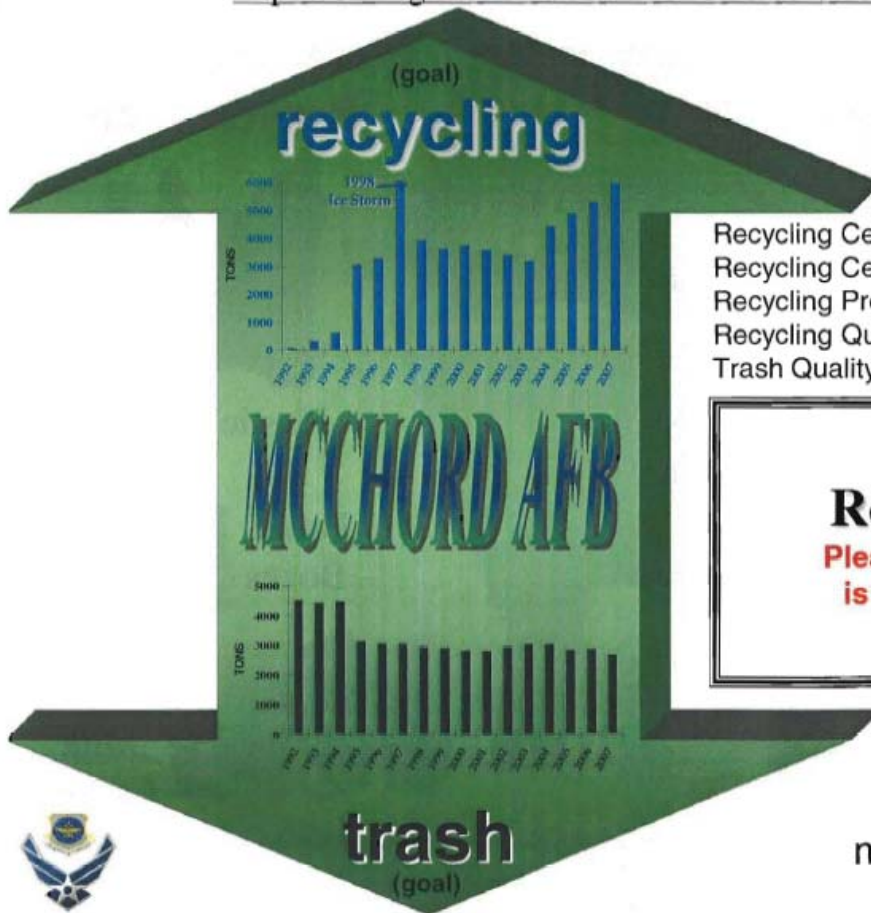
The Central Collection Point is integral to McChord's Recycling Program. Each Recycling Collection Point consists of **four to six Baggits** for **commingled collection**. And one **Combo Container** (Glass, tin, aluminum, all plastic containers, milk cartons and drink boxes, plastic bags, shrink & bubble wrap). Pick up office recycling containers from the Recycling Center. Call the Recycling Center at 982-3451 for more information.

Baggits	Set beside RCP in a box	*Other items include:	Combo Containers
Mixed Paper	Other Recyclable Items *	CD's and cases, floppy disks, ink jets cartridges, cassettes, VCR tapes, audio tape, clothing.	Glass, Aluminum, Tin, all Plastics, Milk Cartons, Drink Boxes, Plastic Bags, Shrink/bubble wrap
Cardboard			

Baggits
Office Recycling Collection Point Setup

McChord Sharepoint Recycling Training Guides

<https://62msg.mcchord.af.mil/62CES/cev/recycling/default.aspx>



"for our children...
...recycle, buy recycled!"

Recycling Center	982-3451
Recycling Center Manager	982-5101
Recycling Program Manager	982-3913
Recycling Quality Assurance Personnel	982-3913
Trash Quality Assurance Personnel	982-3099

Retiree Newsletter

Please ensure this newsletter is read by all your buddies!

Printed on Recycled Paper



mcchord people recycle

