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Media Contact:

Amber McNeil

Picerne Military Housing

(580)581-2108 office

(580)574-9343 cell

(580)581-2163 fax

amcneil@picernemh.com

www.picernemilitaryhousing.com

Housing Privatization: What does it mean to you?

Fort Sill, Oklahoma, August 6, 2008 - You may have heard the terms Residential Communities Initiative, or RCI, and privatized family housing being used at Fort Sill. But do you know what they mean? They all have to do with a new program that will change the face of family housing on post over the next 50 years.

In the mid 1990's, the federal government realized in order to retain service members, their quality of life had to improve on the installations. Building better homes and making significant renovations and improvements to existing homes could accomplish this. The government also knew it did not have the means to achieve this goal and decided to privatize military family housing. Privatization means that private sector expertise and private financing would be brought on post as partners to improve the family housing situation faster than the government could do it.

The Army established Residential Communities Initiative to partner with private developers. In 2007, the Army and Fort Sill selected Picerne Military Housing to build, own, renovate, manage and maintain family housing on post for the next 50 years.

“The partnership is long-term and focused on the sustainability of housing and enhancing the quality of family and community life for Fort Sill’s Soldiers and their Families,” said Jim Grant, Picerne Military Housing Program Director.

Fort Sill and Picerne worked together to develop the Community Development and Management Plan (CDMP), which is the blueprint for the 50 years of the project. The CDMP’s final approval from Congress is expected in mid-August, which means Picerne will assume responsibility for the family housing at Fort Sill on November 1.

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Privatization, ADD ONE

“We have gone to great lengths during the planning phase to ensure that neighborhoods are designed to create homes that appeal to today’s modern, military Families,” Grant said.

What will this mean for families living on post? As in the private sector, soldiers will sign a lease and will start receiving their Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to pay rent for the homes they live in on post. The rent equals the BAH received by the service member and includes basic utilities and some renter’s insurance. For dual military members both living at Fort Sill, the resident’s rent will equal only the highest pay grade member’s BAH at the with-dependent rate. The other member will retain his or her BAH.

The lease, called the Resident Occupancy Agreement (ROA), is for 12 months and renews month-to-month unless PCS, ETS or retirement orders require earlier termination. To live in privatized family housing, residents must sign a lease prior to November 1, 2008.

“When Picerne begins managing family housing, residents will see positive changes beginning day one,” said Grant. “Neighborhood management offices will open on day one, staffed with professional teams dedicated to providing Soldiers and their Families with exceptional service.”

Picerne’s property management and maintenance staff will be housed in two Neighborhood Offices. One office will be located in Geronimo Acres and the other will be located in White Wolf Manor. Eventually, a third Neighborhood Center will be constructed in the new neighborhood which will be built at the old Cedar Lakes Golf Course.

An immediate maintenance plan will be implemented to alleviate the deferred maintenance and other maintenance concerns of residents. Picerne will also mow the lawns, do the landscaping, enhance street lighting, repair streets and sidewalks, and build new playgrounds and bus stops. These services are an expression of Picerne’s Families First[®] philosophy.

Picerne is family owned and operated and has been building and managing residential communities for 84 years.

The company is one of the top 20 builders in the United States and has also partnered with Forts Meade, Bragg, Polk, Rucker and Riley under the RCI program. Picerne Military Housing was also recently selected to partner with Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

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