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**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE F-35 PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM
IS TAKING OFF, BOOSTING ECONOMY, REIAC MEMBERS LEARN**

PHOENIX, Ariz. (January 21, 2016) – Luke Air Force Base is roughly a quarter of the way toward its goal of building a six-squadron fleet of F-35 Lightning II fighter jets by 2024 – a move that will significantly enhance the base’s \$2 billion annual economic impact in the West Valley.

Speaking at a recent meeting of the Southwest Chapter of the Real Estate Investment Advisory Council (REIAC), Maj. Matt “Diesel” Mayer, assistant director of operations for the 61st Fighter Squadron, said the 56th Fighter Wing now counts 34 American, Australian and Norwegian jets in its first F-35 training squadrons. Ultimately, the fleet will include 144 of the jets known for their stealth and agility.

American and international pilots already have begun training side by side in a new, reciprocal program that has the base partnering with 14 nations over the next decade, including Israel, Japan, Korea and Italy. As the program expands, Luke will host pilots, planes and instructors from around the world for training.

From a real estate standpoint, Mayer said the \$5.3 million F-35 training program will enhance the base’s economic impact to the community by requiring the construction of new facilities to house the sophisticated fleet. Additionally, as the number of base personnel grows, so will the need for off-base housing. Presently, the base employs nearly 5,500 military members and civilians and generates approximately \$2 billion in economic impact, annually.

“Most people are aware that the base plays a major role in the West Valley’s economy, but Major Mayer opened our eyes to how fortunate the Valley is to host the F-35 program and its

additional benefits to the region,” said Mark Singerman, REIAC chapter president and vice president, regional director – Arizona for the Rockefeller Group Development Corporation.

“Our members – who are top real estate executives involved in developing, acquiring and/or financing real estate – were very interested to learn that Luke provides permanent housing for only about 150 personnel on base. This means that the vast majority of military and civilian employees live and shop in the communities near the base -- including the visiting pilots from our partner nations here for training that lasts up to 12 months.”

The first class of Air Force students began training on F-35 simulators last May, when the base officially announced a new mission focusing on the high-tech, fifth-generation aircraft. Trainees since have progressed to actual flights as Luke gradually sends its F-16s to Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico and replaces them with F-35s.

According to Mayer, the single-pilot F-35, which weighs 30,000 pounds empty, is technologically superior to any previous aircraft. It is able to diagnose mechanical problems and advise the pilot, pinpoint targets and threats with amazing accuracy, utilize voice recognition, and deploy versatile weapons capabilities. It also is the first aircraft for which the pilot’s helmet is specifically designed and equipped for the jet.

“The F-35 is extremely high tech,” Mayer said. “It takes everything to an entirely new level.”

Luke Air Force Base, which celebrated its 75th anniversary last year, was established to train fighter pilots in World War II. It has since trained pilots for every American conflict.





About REIAC

The Real Estate Investment Advisory Council (REIAC) was established as a nonprofit trade association to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, concerns and experiences among senior executives who conduct commercial real estate transactions. The invitation-only group limits its membership to senior-level executives at companies, who act as principals, and whose function is to develop, acquire, manage and/or finance commercial real estate. Institutional quality programs and peer-to-peer relationship-building opportunities have established REIAC's reputation throughout the national real estate investment community as one of its premier associations.

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