

Military Families Get Help Selling Homes When PCSing

The Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) has been expanded to help service members who have received PCS orders and are forced to sell their homes. ackage included \$555 million to help individuals who meet eligibility criteria. The Department of Defense (DoD) would reimburse individuals up to 95 percent of the value lost on the home if it was purchased before July 1, 2006. The DoD also has the option to purchase the home for up to 90 percent of the fair market value. The program is also available to the widows of Defense Department civilian employees killed in the line of duty. It is modeled on an existing DoD program for civilians affected by base closures under BRAC. For more information please visit the USACE's HAP website at www.sas.usace.army.mil/hapinv/index.html

DoD Schools Raise Age Requirement

Young military children who thought their first day of school was imminent may not yet be eligible, due to a change in entrance age requirements for Defense Department schools.

The new rule, which goes into effect July 2009, requires that students reach the pre-established age by September 1. Students must be four years old to enroll in pre-kindergarten or the Defense Department's Sure Start program. Kindergartners must be five, and first graders, six. Under current rules, children have to reach the above ages by October 31.

The Department of Defense Education Activity made the change after research showed that 36 states require kindergartners to be five by September 1 or earlier, Marc

Mossburg, chief of curriculum for DoDEA, said. "This was done nationally for a variety of reasons, but it basically gives most kids a sure start in kindergarten and first grade," Mossburg said. "We did make the choice to align ourselves with the nation. We're trying to keep pace with the nation and trying to make sure our military kids have that advantage."

DoDEA's decision to implement the change also was, in part, an effort to ease the transition of students who start in a defense school, but then transfer to a public school, Mossburg said. "We wanted to make sure that our kids, if they go to kindergarten and they transfer to a first grade in the States, that they are ready to enter that first grade," he said.

Consequently, students who have completed a year at an accredited kindergarten and then transfer to a DoDEA school can enroll in first grade regardless of whether they meet the age requirement, Mossburg said. For more information, visit www.dodea.edu

Disney Parks Honor Military

If your PCS takes you through central Florida or southern California, you may consider taking advantage of the Disney theme parks' 2009 military special. With the "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" offer, active and retired U.S. military personnel, including active members of the United States Coast Guard and activated members of the National Guard or Reservists, can enjoy complimentary, multi-day admission into Disney's U.S. theme parks, great rates at select Walt Disney World and Disneyland Resort hotels, and additional special ticket offers for family members and friends.

Through June 12, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military can

receive one complimentary three-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket valid for admission to both Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure parks. During the offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel also may make a one-time purchase of an adult or child three-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion" ticket for up to five family members (including spouse) or friends for the price of an adult 1-Day Park Hopper ticket.

Through Dec. 23, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military may obtain one complimentary five-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket with Park Hopper and Water Park Fun & More options. This ticket is valid for five days of admission into the four Walt Disney World theme parks, plus a total of five visits to a choice of a Disney water park,

DisneyQuest Indoor Interactive

Theme Park or certain other attractions.

During this offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel may also make a one-time purchase of up to a maximum of five, five-Day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion" tickets for \$99 per ticket, plus tax, for family members (including spouse) or friends.

Although this ticket for family members and friends does not include either the Park Hopper or Water Park Fun & More options, this ticket can be upgraded to add either such option, or both, for an additional \$25, plus tax, per option.

Both locations are also offering special rates on lodging on a space-available basis.

For more information on these offers, or to make reservations, contact the ITT office on your installation. Information is also available at www.disneyworld.com/military. ●



Disney World in Florida.