



## Business

# Marine base pumps millions into economy

MORONGO BASIN — One part of the impact the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center has had on the economy of the Morongo Basin can be summed up in one word: Money.

A total of \$465,511,540 in payroll and retirement benefits are added to the Morongo Basin economy by the combat center.

This is according to a report, "Community Impact Assessment," released recently by Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command at the combat center.

"A military base usually represents a major economic activity in the region it is located," the report notes.

"Often military bases are located in remote and isolated areas, and the towns and cities that grow up around them are inter-dependent economically on the health and growth of the base."

The combat center employed 11,967 people in military and civilian positions in 2006 and paid those employees salaries and wages totaling about \$412.8 million, according to the report.

It further notes 1,076

military and civilian retirees living in Twentynine Palms in 2006 collected \$25 million in pensions. Retirees in the Morongo Basin, the report states, receive \$42.8 million a year in pensions.

In Joshua Tree alone, military and civilian retirees received \$4 million in pensions in 2006.

Health care expenses for combat center troops and their families totaled \$8 million in 2006, with local Naval hospital officials estimating that at least half that amount was spent with

Morongo Basin health care

providers. Combat center civilian health care costs for the same time were estimated at \$3 million, with much of that also staying in the Morongo Basin.

At the combat center, the report states, a total of \$152 million in contracts are let annually.

According to the Provost Marshal's Office, as many as 2,500 subcontractors worked on the Marine base during fiscal year 2006.

"Although a certain portion of these subcontractors are local residents, others stay in town at hotels and

motels. These subcontractors also contribute to local retail revenues as they spend wages and per diem in local grocery stores, restaurants and on automotive repair, gasoline (and associated taxes) and entertainment," the report states.

The report also notes the federal government compensates school districts for educating the dependents of federal employees. In 2006, this meant a payment of \$1.6 million.

Copper Mountain College gets a large portion of its enrollment from combat center

military and civilian employees, and families on base and in Joshua Tree.

The college, the report states, has estimated that at least 15 percent of its full-time equivalent enrollments are directly related to the Marine base, representing at least \$459,000 in state funding to the college district.

According to the report, the combat center paid \$478,672 in property taxes for military housing in Twentynine Palms in 2006 and also paid \$8 million for electricity, natural gas and telephone services.