



LOUISIANA SENATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 04.10.13

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SEN. SMITH URGES CITIZENS ACROSS LOUISIANA TO RAISE THEIR VOICES IN SUPPORT OF FT. POLK

ENCOURAGES A UNITED SHOW OF FORCE FOR U.S. ARMY OFFICIALS' VISIT TO LEESVILLE

District 30 State Senator John Smith (D-Leesville) is joining community and business leaders to urge citizens in the area to raise their voices in support of Fort Polk as officials with the Department of the Army travel to Leesville Monday, April 15th to hold a community listening meeting regarding the future of the U.S. Army base in Vernon Parish. After a visit to the base, the officials will travel through Leesville to the United Pentecostal Church for the community meeting.

Citizens of all ages and from all walks of life who are impacted by Fort Polk, directly or indirectly, are encouraged to line the streets along the route from the base to the church in a show of force in support of Fort Polk beginning at 3:30 p.m. The planned route runs from LA 467, then north at Third Street and west on East Texas Highway to the church. The public is also urged to pack the 1,500-seat church for the hearing.

"We need to make sure that we send a clear message through our words and actions that we are united in our support of Fort Polk. We need to make sure that the folks from Washington, D.C. know what this military installation and its related activities mean to our area, to our state and to our nation," Sen. Smith said.

U.S. Army officials are gathering information regarding the Army 2020 Force Restructure decision. The proposal is to reduce active duty end-strength from 562,000 at the end of 2012 to 490,000 by FY 2020. Fort Polk could see a force reduction of 5,300 soldiers and civilians; no change; or a growth of about 1,000 soldiers depending on how the Army decides to approach the base changes.

Fort Polk is the largest non-state government employer in Louisiana. The estimated economic impact of the base and its related operations is \$1.86 billion.

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