

THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE IS CHANGING THE WAY ARMY FAMILIES LIVE. UNDER THE PROGRAM THE ARMY IS PRIVATIZING FAMILY HOUSING IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ HAS THAT STORY.

ASHLEY RITTERBY DOES NOT CARE FOR ARMY HOUSING.

“THE HOUSE IS FALLING APART (CUT). THERE’S MOLD SEEPING THROUGH THE WALLS; IT’S ABSOLUTLY DISGUSTING TO LIVE HERE...EVERYTHING ABOUT LIVING HERE IS DISGUSTING.”-ASHLEY RITTERBY

THEY CAN’T AFFORD OFF POST HOUSING SO THE RITTERBY’S ARE STUCK IN DECAYING FAMILY QUARTERS. IT’S A COMMON SITUATION ARMY WIDE.

“WHAT WE HAVE FOUND IS THAT TRADITIONAL PROCESSES RESULTED IN A BACK LOG OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE QUARTERS THAT WE HAVE IN THE MANNER THAT SOLDIERS REALLY DESERVE. “ –RHONDA HAYES

THE ARMY HOPES TO CHANGE THAT WITH THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE. UNDER THE PLAN A DEVELOPER WOULD LEASE THE LAND, BUILD NEW HOMES AND MANAGE THE COMMUNITIES LIKE OFF POST HOUSING.

FT MEAD MARYYLAND IS ONE OF 28 POST SLATED FOR R-C-I. PICERNE REAL ESTATE GROUP PLANS TO BUILD 5 NEIGHBORHOODS IN 10 YEARS. AT THE HEART OF EACH NEIGHBORHOOD A COMMUNITY CENTER WITH A HOUSING OFFICE, MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE AND OTHER COMMUNITY AMENITIES. BUT PICERNE OFFICIALS SAY THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS THE LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SERVICE.

“I CAN PUT FACES TO NAMES, I HAVE OFFICES TO GO TO. I KNOW WHOM I’M TALKING TO EVERYDAY. I KNOW THAT TAMMY’S IN CHARGE HERE

AND I KNOW BROOK, AND ITS NO LONGER, 'HI MY NAME IS SO AND SO.'  
THEY ACTUALLY KNOW ME AT THE OFFICES." - PEGGY STOKKE  
THE ARMY KNOWS THAT WHILE IT ENLISTS SOLDIERS IT RE-ENLISTS  
FAMILIES. AND IF THE FAMILIES FEEL GOOD ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE  
DOING AND HOW THEY'RE LIVING THEY'RE MORE LIKELY TO STICK  
AROUND. JAVIER HERNANDEZ, FT MEAD MARYLAND