Changes to MWR facilities' hours, prices will ensure ongoing quality of services

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Customers using various Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facilities aboard NAS Patuxent River and NRC Solomons will experience some necessary changes in order to assure ongoing quality of services continue for years to come. Customers will likely see some reduction in hours and/or an increase in prices for a number of MWR activities — a result of financial restrictions that impact services at region and installation levels.

"Throughout the Navy enterprise, we're struggling for fiscal support and that includes the MWR program around the world, not just here at Pac," explained Jeff Sias, N9 director for Pax River. "We don't have the money we used to have even just a few years ago. This is about having to stay up with inflationary costs incrementally and doing it smartly; it's not to make a profit."

MWR operations fall into one of three categories: Category A "mission essential," such as the Drill Hall fitness center, is primarily funded by tax dollars (appropriated funding); Category B "nice to have," such as the bowling center, is a mix of appropriated funding and monies generated by the center through customer participation fees; and Category C "self-sustaining," such as the River's Edge Catering and Conference Center, is ineligible for any type of support and funding comes only from revenue generated by the facility via the prices paid for its goods and services.

None of MWR's operations are allowed to make a true profit and operate under the business rules to break-even or not lose money.

"We are expected to operate our Category C activities like a true business would outside the gate, but where we differ is that we're not required to generate the large profit margins of a civilian company," said Doug Arnett, MWR director. "In this category, we have to maintain revenues at least 5 percent above break-even margin, which is very small, to put back into programming and activities. When we change our prices or adjust our services, it may be perceived by the customer that we're trying to make more, but in most cases, we're just trying to generate enough to pay for what we do."

See CHANGES, Page 2

VX-1 Sailors help kick off the NMCRS 2018 Fund Drive

Sailors of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 1 pose with their Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Excellence Award flag after the NMCRS 2018 Fund Drive kickoff in the VX-1 Hangar at NAS Patuxent River Feb. 28. As the command that raised the most funds during last year's fund drive, VX-1 had the honor of hosting this year's kickoff event.

The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is to provide — in partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps — financial, educational and other assistance to members of the Naval Service of the United States, eligible family members, and survivors when in need; and to receive and manage funds to administer these programs.

For more information on NMCRS services or to donate, contact Maureen Farrell, director of the NMCRS Pax River office, at 301-342-4739 or Maureen.Farrell@nmcrs.org. The Pax NMCRS office is located in Building 401, and is open for assistance 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday.