



FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY

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MEDIA RELEASE

FORA EXECUTIVE OFFICER HOULEMARD RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD

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Michael Houlemard, executive officer of Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), is the recipient of the 2019 Association of Defense Communities (ADC) John Lynch Community Leadership Award. The award recognizes and is given to an individual whose outstanding leadership has served as a model for other base closure communities across the country. The award requires that the recipient's leadership has been essential in ensuring that a community or local redevelopment authority has shown measurable results and has significantly assisted in addressing community-specific economic needs following a base realignment or closure.

"Michael has worked to ensure the proper recovery and reuse of the former Fort Ord and to maintain a positive transition as we move forward into the future. I was proud to present him with this award not just for what he has done for the former base, but for what he has done and will continue to do for our entire region," said Congressman Jimmy Panetta at the ADC Conference now in session June 10-12.

ADC's Base Redevelopment Leadership award is named after John Lynch, a long-time employee of the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment, who helped communities and contractors dealing with base closures and defense downsizing in the 1990s. Lynch's contributions as a volunteer also led to creating ADC as an independent organization that continues to assist communities recovering from or facing potential closures.

Houlemard has served as the executive officer of FORA since 1997. He has guided planning, implementation and financing of redevelopment for one of the largest and most complex Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects in the nation. FORA is responsible for redevelopment and economic recovery efforts serving a three-county region and must coordinate with over 60 other special districts and regulatory agencies to accomplish its work. FORA was formed in 1994 by special State legislation to assure regional representation. The FORA Board consists of 9 voting members and 13 non-voting members.

"The complicated management structure required a really skillful and multi-talented leader," said former Congressman Sam Farr who co-authored the legislation to establish a reuse authority following Fort Ord's closure. "The former Fort Ord area is Michael's legacy and the communities are grateful to him for his vision."

Former Fort Ord is comprised of 28,000 acres. Under Houlemard, more than 18,000 acres are now permanently preserved for open space and recreational use, and his leadership in envisioning and helping to secure designation of what is now the Fort Ord National Monument provides tangible evidence of opportunities that will continue to be available to future generations.

Of particular challenge during and since closure has been the identification of former Fort Ord as a Super Fund site due to its history as a military training location as well as changes in regulations over its nearly 100 years existence as a military installation. Houlemard has been instrumental in obtaining over \$300 million in federal funds for recovery projects, not the least of which has been the Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement (ESCA) with the U.S. Army which allowed FORA to expedite identification and removal of munitions and explosives to protect public safety.

Houlemard's work has additionally been recognized with receipt of awards including a 2018 Office of the Secretary of Defense award for exemplary work in base redevelopment, the American Planning Association's Best Practice award, the Special Districts Resource Management Authority's Presidents Special Acknowledgement award, and the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce's Public Official of the Year award.

Since former Fort Ord officially closed in 1994, FORA has focused on three areas of community interest: education, environment and economic development. Economic reuse includes development of housing and jobs, retail and commercial development, and infrastructure improvements.

The former base is now home to CSUMB and MPC campuses as well as extensions of UC-Santa Cruz, MPUSD and other educational facilities. A large medical facility now provides services for veterans and active-duty military members and families in the region. Major infrastructure projects for roads, water and sewer improvements have been provided as part of the Capital Improvements Program and additional projects are scheduled in the coming months. New residential developments and a large shopping center are established. Additional residential and commercial and retail facilities and jobs will continue to phase in over time.

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