

## MCCS orders up diversity for service members' tastes

Contributed by By Lance Cpl. Mike Atchue , Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton  
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Upon entering through any of Camp Pendleton's seven gates, visitors and new service members may be surprised at all the familiar eateries the base has to offer its patrons.

Through Marine Corps Community Services, the base is able to bring a touch of home through a variety of commercial dining options within its boundaries.

The base currently offers a variety of dining options that includes everything from traditional American foods like barbecue, hamburgers, sandwiches and pizza, to more exotic foods like Mexican, Mediterranean and Thai food.

"We're here to make our service member's lives better," said Lane Jones, director, Services Division, MCCS. "Service members want hometown goods and services and it's our job to make them feel at home."

Besides military dining and club facilities, the base has more than 25 permanent commercial dining options, five rotational vendors and plans to open three additional restaurants in 2010.

"We have a very robust market on base, especially when it comes to the food market," Jones said. "Our contracted food operations have had more than a 30 percent sales increase since fiscal year 2008."

Many of the installation's eateries can claim some of the most successful dining locations in the region, division or country.

Camp Pendleton attracts multiple food vendors in part because of the base's immunity to the economy, but mainly for the chance to serve the men and women of the military, Jones explained.

Contracted vendors usually follow a three-stage plan before committing to a permanent location on base. They are the incubator, rotational concessions, and brick and mortar stages.

In the incubator stage,

vendors set up a one-time location, where they can get a feel for the demand their food would serve. Once that proves successful, the vendors move on to the rotational concessions stage. In this stage, the vendors rotate between camps daily to determine how successful it could be. Finally, if the vendor deems a location on base to be a success, they can then move into the final brick and mortar stage, Jones explained.

The brick and mortar stage is where the vendors look to setup a permanent location such as a new or existing building or permanent vending location.

“Marine Corps Community Services is constantly finding out what goods and services the service members are looking for,” said Jones. “As the troops travel the world, they get a taste for foods of different regions that allows us to give diverse dining options.”

One of Camp Pendleton’s newest options in the rotational concessions phase is DedeMed’s Shawarma House, which offers Mediterranean-style Middle Eastern food.

“It’s great that the base offers options, such as Mediterranean food, to appease everyone’s tastes,” said Cpl. Alexander Harris, ammunition technician, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group. “For service members who have spent time in the Middle East, Japan or anywhere else, it can really be exciting having these options that can otherwise be difficult to find.”

For 2010, MCCA plans to open three additional brick and mortar restaurants; Coco’s Bakery & Restaurant, Panda Express and Sonic Burger.

“I think we have been successful in making our service members feel at home,” Jones said. “They work hard and deserve it.”