



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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This Month, a Major Milestone for Fort Drum

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

This month, our region is celebrating a major anniversary. It was three decades ago when then Congressman David Martin made the announcement that Fort Drum had been selected as the new home of the 10th Light Infantry Division. What followed was a period of significant growth including a \$1.3 billion dollar investment used to construct 130 new buildings, 35 miles of roadway and more than 4,000 sets of family housing units.

Nearly 30 years later, we're still experiencing the growth and change that Fort Drum acts as a catalyst for. Today, it's continually changing to keep up with today's standards and remain a state-of-the-art military base. Consisting of more than 107,265 acres, Fort Drum boasts 19,605 active duty troops as well as nearly 20,000 family members. It's our state's largest single site employer, with a civilian workforce of nearly 5,000. In addition, the post also has a tremendous economic impact on our region, totaling \$1,505,857,420 annually.

While Fort Drum has expanded exponentially since the reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division, our region stands ready and willing to welcome even more growth. A sign of this support was demonstrated through the more than 9,000 signatures and comments delivered to Army leadership through a collaborative effort with the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization.

Signatures were collected in light of a proposal by the Army to assess the impact of reducing troop levels to numbers not seen since the beginning of World War II. These reductions could mean major cuts at Fort Drum, which is why it's so critical that we continue to show our support for the post.

In the months to come, I'll be continuing to collect signatures in support of Fort Drum at a special website I've created, www.StandUpForFortDrum.com. These signatures will be submitted in advance of a listening session—where local leaders and community members will be able to weigh in on the

importance of the post—which will take place early next year.

There has been no single development that has had a more significant impact on our region than the reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division. As we look to the next 30 years, it's our responsibility to stand up for Fort Drum, it's soldiers, their families and all of the benefits the installation is responsible for. If you haven't already, I encourage you to visit www.StandUpForFortDrum.com and show your support for Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division.