

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS LEADERS KICK OFF
LUKE FORWARD CAMPAIGN TO BRING NEW
F-35 MISSION TO LUKE AIR FORCE BASE**

GLENDALÉ, Ariz. – Government and business leaders kicked off a statewide campaign this morning at the Arizona Capitol to bring the new F-35 joint strike fighter to Luke Air Force Base.

Gov. Jan Brewer hosted the press conference with Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs and other representatives from West Valley cities, Maricopa County and Fighter Country Partnership to make the special announcement regarding the future of Luke Air Force Base.

“Today, we’ve all come together as partners in this new initiative, which has statewide significance and support, to secure the new F-35 mission at Luke,” said Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, co-chair of the *Luke Forward* campaign.

“Luke has served as the Air Force’s ‘school house’ for America’s fighter pilots and our allies since the 1940s, and we do not expect that role to change.”

Luke Air Force Base is currently the largest active-duty F-16 training base in the world and the Air Force is beginning to replace its fleet of F-16s with the new F-35 Lightning II.

The Air Force is expected to release its initial list of military bases that will be candidates for the F-35’s training and operational missions within the next couple weeks and make its final F-35 basing decision in early 2011.

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Luke Forward/add 1-1-1

Through the *Luke Forward* campaign, state and local government and business leaders plan to generate support from citizens living in every city and town in Arizona in order to position the state as a strong supporter of the F-35 training mission with the nation's decision makers in Washington, D.C.

"Luke is the ideal location for this advanced strike fighter, but we need to continue working closely with our federal delegation, the Department of Defense and the Pentagon to demonstrate our state's preparedness and commitment to continue this partnership with the Air Force," said Brewer.

"This *Luke Forward* campaign will help us accomplish this, and I look forward to working with government leaders, business organizations and community groups in support of this statewide effort."

Residents and businesses will be learning about *Luke Forward* through the creation of a new Web site, a speaker's bureau, presentations to business groups, electronic billboards, the use of social media – such as Facebook and Twitter – cable programs and other means.

The focal point will be the campaign's Web site www.lukeforward.com, where residents are being encouraged to register their support of the F-35 training mission at Luke.

"Local community support of military bases is very important back in Washington, and we know there is tremendous Valley- and statewide support for Luke Air Force Base," said Charley Freericks, who is co-chairing the campaign with Scruggs.

"Whether it's the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, PTA or a community group, our plan is to reach as many people as possible through Luke Forward."

In addition to the role that Luke and Arizona's other military installations serve in the nation's defense and preparedness, Arizona's military industry represents one of the largest industries in the state.

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Luke Forward/add 2-2-2

A recent study commissioned by the state found that Arizona's five major military bases – Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Fort Huachuca, Luke AFB, Yuma Marine Corps Air Station and Yuma Proving Grounds -- plus the state's four National Guard facilities -- create and support approximately 96,000 jobs in Arizona and generate more than \$9 billion annually in economic impact statewide.

Luke AFB alone contributes more than 8,000 jobs and \$2.17 billion annually to the state's economy. In addition, due to its location in the Valley, Luke serves a total population of more than 100,000 people when military family members and retirees are factored in. Many military retirees throughout the Valley rely on Luke's on-base services, including medical and dental.

The *Luke Forward* campaign was developed by the West Valley Partners and Fighter Country Partnership to generate awareness and support of the positive impacts the Air Force's next generation strike fighter will bring to Arizona.

The West Valley Partners include Avondale, Buckeye, Glendale, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Maricopa County, Peoria, Phoenix, Surprise, Tolleson, Wickenburg and Youngtown. Fighter Country Partnership is a non-profit organization that supports the men, women and families of Luke Air Force Base and works to protect and enhance the base's mission.

For more information on *Luke Forward* or to schedule a business or community presentation, call 623-882-2191.

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