

Helm

Continued from page A1

ping its Engineering program more and more.

Kelly's prior assignment was as the commander of the Coast Guard's Leadership Development Center, which provides leadership training for the entire service. They also train civilian members of the Coast Guard, people who work in various capacities, such as the dining facility administration, engineering, and the exchange services. He said there are 22 courses, and all Coast Guard members from E-3 up are required to attend certain classes.

"The Coast Guard has a Leadership Development continuum, where we develop a person as a leader throughout his or her career, up to Master Chief," Kelly said.

Kelly said leadership training actually begins the day a recruit arrives at TRACEN. Recruits are taught that in order to be a good leader they first have to learn to be a good follower.

Kelly said he and his wife became enamored with Cape May and ever since he

reached the rank of commander he put it on his "dream sheet" to be assigned to Cape May.

"This is the essence of it all," Kelly said of the training center.

He said when former TRACEN commander Captain Cari B. Thomas was promoted to admiral and her tour of duty shortened by a year, he let it be known this was where he wanted to be assigned. He said he knew who to talk to about the assignment.

"My boss at the time was the one who makes the selection," he said.

Kelly said he got a call a couple of days before Christmas 2009 informing him he was selected.

"I like the fact that this is where it all begins," Kelly said. "This is where 80 percent of our work force begins their career."

Kelly said he sees his job as an opportunity to provide an exceptional work place for all those assigned to the training center, and to provide the best training environment for the recruits.

"That makes coming to



CW3 Veronica Colbath/U.S. Coast Guard
Capt. Bill Kelly, right in photo, addresses a group of recruits who received awards for outstanding performance in basic training.

work here exciting," he said, "and challenging. But it's a noble cause...a right cause."

Kelly said he is excited about the recruits, who he describes as bright, intelligent, and articulate. Kelly spends his Thursday lunch period dining with about eight award-winning recruits every week. He hands out

commander's awards in various areas of recruit training where an individual has excelled.

As he spoke, the captain addressed the recruits as "shipmate." The term, he feels, builds esprit de corps, and perhaps even helps young Guardians choose a career in the Coast Guard.

"It's a term of endearment and inclusion. I've served on six ships, and I can't tell you how many non-rates are now petty officers," Kelly said. "It's more than being teammates or members. Shipmates means you put your life in all their hands. You are shipmates from Day 1."

Kelly said because they care they push all recruits to meet every standard the Coast Guard has. He said the recruits they are getting are "quality kids," although the average age is a recruit is 23. He said close to 50 percent of them have a bachelor's degree, and in every company there are one or two with a master's.

Kelly said his hope is to stay here three years. Thomas' stay was shorted due to a promotion, and both she and Sandra Stosz were promoted to admiral after an assignment as TRACEN commander. Sally Brice-O'Hara, who served five commanders ago, if now vice-commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

Kelly has two sons, Patrick,

18, a freshman at the Coast Guard Academy, and Tyler, 15, who is a sophomore at Holy Spirit. Kelly said he would like to stay in Cape May at least until Tyler graduates high school, after moving him from his high school in Connecticut. But for the time being he is happy to be here.

"It's a great job, a lot of responsibility, but something I've been looking at since I was a lieutenant because it's a great place and a great mission," Kelly said.

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Tom

Continued from page A1

However, Conrad said a councilman doesn't have much say on taxes.

"A lot is state mandated," he said. "Sometimes hands are tied."

Conrad said council has been doing a lot to cut the budget, but the municipal auditor told them the only significant thing they can do to reduce the budget is cut work force.

"But once we lose our work force, with it we will lose services. We're trying to balance how we can do it," he said.

Once of the ways the township actually saved money, he said, was by increasing the pick up of recyclables. Residents asked for pick up of recyclables every week

instead of every two weeks, and it reduced tipping fees and increased the township's recyclable rebate from the county.

Conrad called that an "unforeseen savings," adding that there is little else under their control.

"What has been killing us is insurance. It's been increasing 16 to 20 percent per year. Something is wrong. Our healthcare is very good, but how it is paid for needs to be fixed," he said.

Conrad said council agreed to forego their health benefits two and a half years ago, despite the fact that his daughter needed braces.

"I could use the stipend...but then how can I ask township employees to take a hit. I lead by example," he said.

Conrad said a "paper reval" (an in-house reassessment) helped reduce taxes for a number of residents, and helped overall because the township avoided the cost of numerous appeals to the county board of taxation.

"Most people understand the tax situation," he said. "If we weren't in a recession would people be complaining about a one-cent tax increase? Part of it is the economy. Some people are concerned about the contracts but they were done under previous administration."

Another issue affecting the cost of local government was a decision by the state not to fund the state pension system, when it was costing \$300,000 per year. Prior administrations accepted the pension holiday and now pension payments are back, but they are costing \$1.4 million a year.

"It was a bad decision on the state's part not to fund the pension system," Conrad said.

Conrad said what he hears from most people is they want

to feel safe. They are worried about safety and police responding.

"When someone is breaking into your home you aren't concerned about how much the officer who responds is being paid. When emergency services are needed, they are all good people and people can't say enough about them," he said.

Mainly, Conrad said, people want someone to listen.

"People want someone to vent to," he said.

Conrad said he talked to a resident about the lack of adequate outfall pipes to carry storm water to the bay. Even though the resident did not get what she wanted, he could at least make her understand the difficulty of dealing with federal and state regulations that were causing the delay. He said that is part of the satisfaction of serving on township council.

"We don't do this for the money - we only want to help," Conrad said.

But serving on council has its moments. Conrad said he was criticized recently when

he tried to make a point about raising recreation fees. He said when he tried to say the burden should be shared by all he was publicly criticized.

"It's different when it affects them," he said.

Conrad said there has been talk about the need to build a community. He said when the winter storms came through people saw there was already a community here.

"We have always pulled together when there is a problem," he said.

Asked what needs to be done in the township, Conrad said there were certain things he feels should have already been done.

"Solar and renewable energy. Two years ago if we had jumped in we could be saving \$200,000 to \$300,000 on energy bills without taxpayer money going out for it," he said.

Conrad said the township can still get stimulus money for renewable energy, paying for new roofs on municipal buildings. He said a private contractor would install solar panels and would own the

equipment, but would collect the energy credits and sell power to the township at half the cost it currently pays.

"There is grant money out there. We can start converting HVAC to newer, more efficient systems. It's a win-win situation, but we have to move forward," he said.

Conrad said council has been dragging its feet on renewable energy.

In the end, Conrad believes the township is going to be OK.

"This is a good community. Villas had a bad reputation, but that has stopped," he said.

Conrad said he is trying to do what is right for the community. He has been involved with youth activities, the food bank, trying to push the high school band to get out in the community, trying to get the school into the community and inviting seniors into township schools.

"If we can get the community involved in the little things it ties everything together," he said.

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