"Salute to Communities Week"

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman this week commended the cooperation of citizens in communities across the country where 85 Job Corps Conservation Centers are operated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture.

March 26 to April 2 has been designated by the Job Corps as "Salute to Communities Week." Open house celebrations and other activities will be held by Job Corps Centers throughout the country during the week.

Located on or near Federal and Indian lands throughout the Nation, these Conservation Centers each accommodate 100 to 250 enrollees who perform conservation work while acquiring basic education and work skills.

Under the supervision of experienced Federal conservation officers, enrollees learn basic entry level skills for occupations such as surveying, forestry, carpentry, masonry, and power tool operation.

Secretaries Udall and Freeman noted that more than 13,000 young men in these Job Corps Conservation Centers, more than merely learning, are contributing their time and efforts in helping improve and beautify communities, raising money for charitable causes, donating their blood, helping underprivileged youngsters, rescuing accident victims, fighting fires and floods and preserving and improving natural resources.

These efforts by the Corpsmen, the Secretaries said, do not go unnoticed by nearby communities and their citizens, who have opened their hearts and homes, schools, churches and clubs to these young people.

One such citizen, who found there were 77 Corpsmen financially unable to go home for Christmas, launched a drive in his area to raise $2,100 needed to pay for these trips. The people showed their gratitude quickly, mostly in $1.00 and $5.00 contributions.

In another community, the telephone and telegraph company gave a reception for 100 Corpsmen from the nearby Center and as Christmas gifts, provided free, five minute telephone calls for each Corpsman to anywhere in the country.

"These are typical examples of what went on in a great many communities last Christmas as individuals and groups tried to make the holiday a happy one for these youth. These were not sudden, seasonal impulses but characteristic of year-round community involvement and concern with the Job Corps;' the two Cabinet officers said.

According to Secretaries Udall and Freeman, the success of conservation centers has been, to a great

extent, based upon the vitality of their relationships with their adjacent communities. "For the Job Corps enrollee," they said, "a good community relationship exemplifies the meaning of good citizenship and also provides good opportunities for on-the-job training and participation in community service projects."

Likewise Job Corpsmen have proved their spirit of helpfulness and their willingness to assist people in trouble. The Secretaries cited as examples the following:

When Belmond, Iowa was seriously damaged by a tornado, last October 14, Corpsmen from four Conservation Centers volunteered their services and were rushed to the site. They worked hard and long to help the city dig out.

Earlier in the year, volunteer Corpsmen from three Centers performed similarly to assist the city of Topeka, Kansas, when it was damaged by a severe tornado. Topekans were grateful to the 200 young men who toiled to help clear the debris. Eighty Corpsmen asked to stay longer than originally scheduled so that they could finish the job.

One Center helped to set up what may be one of the most unusual nature trails in the world, a nature trail for the blind. Corpsmen made the signs for the trail and a group of volunteers from the Center helped put them up.

Noting the accomplishments of their respective Departments, Secretaries Udall and Freeman said, "Already the Job Corps has contributed much to the improvement of the public lands administered by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. Estimated value of conservation work performed 'by Job Corps enrollees to date has been substantial and includes developing many miles of new hiking and riding trails, building roads, construction of new recreation areas and related facilities, beautification and erosion control work and construction of many improvements necessary for the proper development and protection of the Nation's natural resources. All of this is needed work not financed in the regular programs of these conservation agencies.

"Not only during Salute to Communities Week -- but on a continual basis since the beginning of the program, we are proud of the Corpsmen accomplishments, -- gratified with the positive response of communities across the Nation in living and working with Corpsmen, and grateful to these same communities for this harmonious relationship," the two Secretaries said.