

Builds Air Force Food Service on its Success With Food 2.0



Turner

Col. Donna L. Turner, USAF, Commander, Air Force Services Activity

Government Food Service: Update us on the progress in modernizing Air Force Food Service.

Food 2.0 is the latest phase; explain what led Air Force Services Activity (AFSVA) to revise its approach from the Food Transformation Initiative (FTI).

Col. Donna Turner: The Air Force began testing the Food Transformation Initiative in 2008. It was designed to modernize Air Force business processes while determining more efficient means of meeting customer needs and desires. The initiative proved to be a great success; it was praised by customers and it provided improvement for business programs. Today, the initiative is referred to as Food 2.0, and program elements have been incorporated across the Air Force Food Service business enterprise.

Government Food Service: How many bases have been modernized under Food 2.0 since FTI began in 2008 to the end of 2017? Has AFSVA selected the next set of installations for renovation?

Turner: As of January 2018, 19 installations were operating under the Food 2.0 concept. Initial site visits have been conducted to bring the next seven proposed locations on board.

Government Food Service: Are any changes being planned or a next phase being readied for after Food 2.0?

Turner: Food 2.0 continues to evolve. Concept “refreshes,” new menus, and implementation of innovative technology to better meet customer needs is an everyday process.

Government Food Service: What is AFSVA learning about what airmen want from food service and how does that influence Food 2.0 plans?

Turner: Our customers are the most important part of our business plan. Their voice continues to influence our team in developing better ways to meet their needs. As an Air Force community, our consumers desire healthier, more convenient items on trend with commercially available opportunities. Not everything has to be healthy, just healthier. Simply reducing portion sizes into more snack-like recipes, sized right, and presented as small plates is a huge hit. Consumers want customizable recipes, made to order and finished in front of them. They’re also looking for “worlds of flavors” as global cuisine and fusion culinary evolve. One of our most recent concept rotations was Bibim-Box, Korean fusion. It was highly successful and we received great feedback from our customers.

Government Food Service: Last year’s Commander’s Update responses mentioned a dining facility design guide for future construction. How is this progressing?

Turner: The master planning of our future Food and Beverage operations is long overdue. We have charted 2018 to build an interactive design guide using modules of core components that can be assembled to meet installation needs. This building block approach will allow installations to design key resources needed to modernize our future. We have learned from our industry partners that changing our physical plant will not only make us more efficient, but provide operational platforms that better meet the needs of our changing customers.

Government Food Service: Talk about how the changes being made to food service have improved dining facility utilization rates and the number of meals served.

Turner: Food 2.0 and our modernization efforts made our operations considerably more efficient and more desirable for all customers. We’re providing more of what they want, so they are using our facilities more often. Essential



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Zachary Wilson, 60th Force Support Squadron, prepares grilled cheese sandwiches during lunch at the Sierra Inn Dining Facility at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. (Photo by Louis Briscese, USAF, 60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs.)

Station Messing meal-card customers have the value added of using our Non-Appropriated Fund

Food and Beverage operations for authorized "Campus Dining" options. Not everything on the menu is offered to them, but both regular and healthier dine-in options are available via their meal card. With more desirable menus and greater access to food across an installation, our utilization rates have increased by more than 15 percent across the Air Force.

Government Food Service: Give us an update on implementing Corporate Automated Food Enterprise (CAFE). What is being learned and how is the information influencing menus and recipes?

Turner: We completed CAFÉ modernization across the Air Force, reconnecting us with our 261 appropriated fund Food and Beverage operations. With our global network back online, we've modernized our worldwide menu with new ingredients, recipes, menus and concepts, providing our legacy customers similar access to those items found to be successful under Food 2.0. In addition, we're beta-testing credit card processing in our legacy dining facility operations. Under Food 2.0, we have found almost 70 percent of paying customers are using plastic, and we feel this is an added customer benefit to our patrons.

Government Food Service: Are there any plans to hold the next Armed Forces Food and Beverage Training Event?

Turner: Yes, we're excited to announce we're in the process of seeking approval for the 2018 Armed Forces Food and Beverage training seminar to be held in San Antonio. Once approved, dates will be announced.

Government Food Service: Talk about the relationship with the National Restaurant Association and its role in the Hennessy and Forum for Culinary Excellence programming.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dariella Williams, 18th Force Support Squadron dining facility shift lead (center), directs a coworker at the Marshall Dining Facility, at Kadena Air Base, Japan. (Photo by Senior Airman Quay Drawdy, USAF, 18th Wing Public Affairs.)

Turner: After the National Restaurant Association Military Foundation

was dissolved, the National Restaurant Association's Educational Foundation made the military a formal part of its charter, ensuring our military men and women have access to training and ultimately job placement within the hospitality and restaurant industry. The foundation's support of the military grew from a decades-long partnership with the Hennessy Trophy Awards program, which recognizes food service excellence within the Armed Forces. This partnership with the Air Force was established in 1956. The program has expanded to include all branches of the military and includes training and support through the development of a host of military hospitality programs.

Today, the foundation provides training and support to military members and promotes hospitality/restaurant career opportunities for veterans and their spouses. The Air Force cherishes this long-standing relationship and we believe this is the oldest military-industry partnership in promoting program improvements while recognizing excellence. The foundation has hosted the Armed Forces Forum for Culinary Excellence since 2007 when the Hennessy Travelers Association Educational Foundation partnered with the National Restaurant Association, dissolving the Hennessy foundation and reorganizing into the Hennessy Travelers Association Historical Society.

Sharing industry passion, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation brings together outstanding service men and women each year for the Armed Forces Forum for Culinary Excellence. This annual event at the Culinary Institute of America Greystone Campus, St. Helena, in California's Napa Valley, features hands-on cooking activities, interactive seminars, mentoring and career coaching.

Students receive guidance and feedback from institute instructors and leading food service executives, suppliers and other industry leaders. The weeklong educational program aims to develop the service members' culinary skills. Seminars and cooking activities focus on areas that

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will enhance their military food service skills, as well as inspire long-term hospitality careers.

The forum also provides an opportunity for restaurant industry leaders and sponsors to engage with those serving our country, provide mentoring and participation in roundtable discussions with attendees. All training costs are funded by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

Government Food Service: *Participation in the Forum expanded to about 46 culinary specialists in 2017 from 41 in 2016. Is participation expected to grow again in 2018? Will the training program change this year at all?*

Turner: Participants are selected by each service's awards program during the on-site evaluations by industry travelers. This program will continue to evolve at a pace supported solely by industry funding, sponsorship and support to the foundation. Our programs simply would not survive without it. These industry partners help support the foundation's mission and vision for our military programs. Their support makes possible the Hennessy/Hill Awards programs and the Armed Forces Forum for Culinary Excellence. To support restaurant-career training, military hospitality programs and small-business ownership opportunities for military personnel, contact Alyssa Prince at (202) 973-3679 or check out the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation Industry Impact and Military Partnership website (<http://www.restaurant.org/Industry-Impact/Giving-Back/Military-Foundation/Sponsors>).

Government Food Service: *NRA culinary training participants spent a day visiting booths on the exhibit floor and two days in training at Kendall College, which included planning a dining facility. Talk about the plans they presented.*

Turner: The culinary training in Chicago (Kendall College) was attended by Air Force Food Service managers from installations that competed for the Hennessy award. Last year, the first day was used to conduct industry training. The next day and a half, joint

service teams were developed and challenged to utilize knowledge gained to develop a plan to open a new food and beverage operation to include facility design, menu development and labor. Teams presented their plans to a panel of industry experts to critique their presentations. This training was a huge success and teams received outstanding feedback from our industry experts. Plans are underway to conduct similar training, emphasizing the top military initiative to promote a healthy lifestyle for our military customers. The knowledge gained through this exercise will be utilized by our food and beverage managers throughout the Department of Defense when tasked to renovate or build new food operations.

Government Food Service: *Also, tell us about how the 2017 Hennessy evaluations went and if any changes are planned for this year's evaluations.*

Turner: Our John L. Hennessy program dates back to 1956, and while our day-to-day operations have evolved over time through this industry partnership, we are excited to say it continues to improve all of our operations globally. We learn so much from our industry partner travelers as they volunteer and give back through this program. They educate us on better ways to exceed customer expectations. Also, our operators in the field provide us great feedback for process improvements. While conducting evaluations, our travelers learn first-hand what we need to improve upon and glean knowledge from our fellow industry travelers. Upon conclusion of evaluations, the team develops a comprehensive trip report used around the globe to improve all of our Air Force Food and Beverage operations. Amazingly, the vision of John L. Hennessy since 1956 was just that ... constant process improvement through an industry-sponsored spirited competition ... and 2018 marks 62 years of continued success.

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Airman 1st Class Albert Homa, a food services apprentice assigned to the 28th Force Support Squadron, serves a customer inside the Raider Café at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., Jan. 11, 2018. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Donald C. Knechtel, USAF, 28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs.)



A customer is served at the Marshall Dining Facility at Kadena Air Base, Japan. In addition to breakfast, lunch and dinner, the DFAC also offers midnight meals for members on night shifts. (Photo by Senior Airman Quay Drawdy, USAF, 18th Wing Public Affairs.)