

The City of Glendale annexed Luke Air Force Base in 1995 in an effort to better manage the rapid development of what was once agricultural land near and around the base. A Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round had just been completed and Luke was spared, although not without pointed commentary about how residential growth might cause problems in the future.

Our realization that Washington DC saw a military base with multiple cities supporting it but no real “voice” to speak on its behalf prompted us to immediately annex Luke into Glendale. It had been in Glendale’s “strip annexation area” for close to 20 years at that time, and was generally considered to be in our city.

Luke Air Force Base plays an obvious role in the protection of our great nation. It is also an important economic contributor and an active community partner. The Base has over 8,000 employees and contributes nearly \$2 billion annually to the state’s economy. Most of Arizona’s cities benefit financially from Luke AFB in multiple ways: its contracts for goods and services; its visitors who stay and tour the state; and the military and civilian personnel who spend their pay for housing and at businesses in many communities.

Luke Air Force personnel are our neighbors, our partners and our friends. We see them at our schools, when we visit our local grocery stores and when we attend our religious services.

Luke is also present through community outreach activities. Base personnel contribute nearly 100,000 community volunteer hours annually. These contributions include such things as coaching sports, partnering with non-profit agencies and civic organizations and taking part in community fund raisers. What better role models for our youth and community members than those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to protecting our nation?

Air Force Week is an event that gives citizens the opportunity to see and meet active duty officers and to tell their amazing story of the Air Force. The inaugural Air Force Week took place last year in St. Louis and, due to its success, the Air Force Week program has expanded to six locations this year. One of these locations is right here in Glendale. Air Force Week is March 19 to 25, culminating with the Luke Days Air Show on March 24 and 25.

Air Force Week gives us an opportunity to reflect on the significant impact that Luke Air Force Base has on our city, our state and our nation. Anytime you see Luke personnel out and about in the community please take the time to show your support and appreciation for all they do.