

FEATURE

Twenty-four shopping days and counting

Story and photos by
Senior Airman Jason Smith
437 AW Public Affairs

Cookies are baking, people are kissing under mistletoe, heavy-set men in red suits are running around the malls and dirty pine-trees are being brought into homes all across Charleston AFB. Other than the lack of white stuff on the ground, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

When searching for that perfect gift for a loved one, or trying to stay on the good side of a girlfriend or boyfriend, look no farther than the CAFB BX.

From hardware to jewelry, and everything in between, the BX has something for everyone without the stress of dealing with the un-moveable mob that can plague the larger malls this time of year.

"Scooters, Celebration Barbie

and 'Techno,' the robot dog, are some of the more popular items this year," said Kathy Garcia, BX hardline sales area manager. "TVs, computers, Palm Pilots, digital cameras, DVD players, clothes, jewelry and cosmetics are selling well also. Our shelves are full and we're ready for the rush. The great part is that we can guarantee you won't pay more here because of the Army and Air Force Exchange Best Price program."

AAFES Best Price program, in military terms, is a counter-measure to low price attacks launched from off-base retail sites in a price-war attempt to win the customer. Basically, the BX will match any price on items sold at other stores for less, with the exception of gimmick promotions, double and triple coupons, clearance items and flat percentage off items. They

will also take 10 percent off the lowest price on IMPAC card purchases.

"I'm getting my husband a 25-inch TV for Christmas," said Margaret Barry, Summerville, S.C. resident and BX customer. "The price here really makes it a great purchase."

Barry isn't the only one shopping at the BX this holiday season. Garcia said she's talked to a lot of people who are realizing the shopping potential the BX has this season.

"We want to be the first choice," said Daniel Schmidt, AAFES general manager. "Our mission is to provide all members of the military community with the best possible merchandise and services at the lowest possible prices."

Quality service, avoiding crowds and the Best Price program are good reasons to shop at the BX, according to Schmidt, but he stressed not to forget about the Morale, Welfare and Recreation program.

"In Fiscal Year 1999, we gave \$478,065 back to the Charleston MWR program," said Schmidt. "We've given \$353,615 back so far this year, and we still have November through January earnings coming in. November and December are our busiest months, so we hope to top last year's figure. Keep in mind that money stays right here on Charleston AFB."

The BX has also donated wrapping paper and other supplies to units participating in the gift-wrapping booth outside the BX. Squadron representatives are working hard for donations by neatly wrapping purchases for wrapping-challenged folks. While no promises were made, there is a



Kathy Garcia, BX hardline sales area manager, said scooters are a popular item this year.

sense of understanding that the workers at the booth will not squeal on gift givers who claim they neatly wrapped the gifts themselves.

Tech. Sgt. Suzie Henry, 437th Airlift Wing Staff command section, said she has known all the benefits of shopping at the BX for quite some time.

"I always come here first," said Henry. "I'm looking for a computer for my son. He's in high school, and he absolutely needs one. I know I'll get the best price here."

Henry also said her son reads the *Airlift Dispatch* and if her comments were printed, it may ruin his Christmas surprise. **(Editor's note: Sorry about that.)**



Tech. Sgt. Suzie Henry, 437th Airlift Wing command section, looks over computers at the BX.



Margaret Barry, Summerville, S.C., resident and BX customer, purchased a 25-inch TV as a Christmas gift for her husband.