

*'Quantum leap forward'*

# Chief of Staff Survey spins itself onto Web

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**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas** — Booting up a computer and connecting to the World Wide Web could afford someone the opportunity to change how the Air Force spends its money and the way it does its business.

The 1999 Air Force Chief of Staff Survey, a poll to gain understanding of quality of life and organizational climate issues, begins Sept. 30. The Air Force conducted a similar survey in 1997 and more than 206,000 airmen and civilians responded.

This is, however, the first time the survey will be available via the Web. Users can log on to the survey's home page and take the survey there. The site is secure and allows users to remain anonymous throughout the process, according to Capt. Scott Hopkins, one of the chief architects behind creating the technology for the massive polling effort for the CSAF Survey team.

"Survey participants should feel completely comfortable with using the Web site," he said. It's simple, quick and allows users to come and go as they need."

Between collection of statistics and actual answering of questions, the survey can take about 30 minutes, Hopkins said. So the design team has built in a feature to allow users to stop and start again. Participants will be given a user name and password for re-entry on to the site.

Once completed, the survey information enters a database for later use. In the 1997 survey, results weren't available until almost the middle of 1998; however, Hopkins said technology allows for the information to be collected, crunched and under-

stood faster.

"It's really a quantum leap forward," he said, "and the best part is participants and those who did not participate will see the results come forward that much faster. It's really great."

Once the numbers are crunched, a report is prepared for commanders at nearly every level. Survey results will help Air Force leaders improve areas where people perceive problems, said Capt. Pete Berg, also with the survey team.

"Once commanders have the report in their hands, they can choose to do anything they want with it. The emphasis," he said, "is for commanders to really get a handle on their organization's current state of being and how airmen feel about the force they serve with. Then, to get out there and talk to their people about the results, and create positive change. We think it will be a very valuable tool for them."

Charleston AFB is an example of the difference the survey can make.

"The last survey done two years ago was distributed to the



senior leadership, the wing and group commanders," said Larry Orndorff, base quality specialist. "They went over the results and comments over several meetings, and decided that one of the most distressing concerns on base was parking problems. They acted to help relieve that problem. There are now bigger parking lots by the club, by the flying squadrons and other areas on base.

"General Ryan said that the results from the last survey helped generate the support for higher pay raises and return to the 50 percent retirement," Orndorff added.

The quality-of-life portion of the survey addresses base-level community and educational programs, personnel tempo, compensation, medical care, housing and retirement programs. The organizational climate portion asks questions about core values, job characteristics, unit resources and more.

Ultimately, the goal is to get as many people involved with taking the survey as possible. Berg said the survey will also be available in a localized, personal computer based form for those not-so-Web savvy customers.

Two years ago, survey respondents helped get "one-plus-one" dormitories created, Berg said. And what can the future hold?

"Just about anything," he said. "Everything that comes from the survey comes directly from the input we receive," he concluded. "Why miss a chance to give an opinion to the Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Michael Ryan?"

The last chance to take the survey will be Oct. 29. Commanders should receive final reports between January and March, Berg said.

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