

EAGA Business Builder

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Today's guest speaker was Colonel David Wyrick—Deputy Commander 377th Air Base Wing, Kirtland AFB



This morning, Colonel Wyrick had a presentation with some very interesting history and insight about activities at Kirtland Air Force Base. For more than 80 years, the base has been part of the US National Defense System. The Albuquerque Army Air Base was constructed in the early 1940s as the US became more involved in WWII. That base was primarily to train pilots and air crew in preparation for combat in B17, B25 and B29 aircraft. In 1942 Albuquerque Army Base was renamed to Kirtland Field in honor of Colonel Roy Kirtland. Colonel Kirtland was one of the Army's early pilots. He trained with Wright Brothers and piloted the first aircraft from which a machine gun had been fired in 1912. In the 1940s, Kirtland Field became home for the 19th Bombardment Group, commanded at the time by General Eugene Eubank (another familiar name). In 1948, Kirtland Field became Kirtland Air Force Base, then in 1971, Sandia Base and Manzano Base merged into Kirtland to become the sixth largest base in the US Air Force. Kirtland operations were also a major part of the Manhattan Project during the war. Over the years, changes in technology and military weapons have modified the missions and activities at Kirtland. Currently the base covers about 52,000 acres (making it larger than Washington D.C.). Part of the facility is an approximately 300,000 sq ft underground storage complex, 40ft beneath the surface. About 25,000 people work at the base, but a large portion of those are Sandia National Labs contractor personnel. All five of the military service branches (including Space Force) have operations at Kirtland. There are currently five major missions ongoing at Kirtland including activities for Special Ops; AF Weapons Center; AF Research Facility; Laser and Electromagnetic research; Satellite and Directional Energy projects (more satellites are managed from Kirtland than are from the Colorado Springs facility) and Sandia Labs research and operations projects. Kirtland is also the location for the world's largest all wood structure. It is huge, and sturdy enough to support a B52 bomber. Though no longer in active use, the structure was built for electro-magnetic pulse testing, hence the need for there being no metal whatsoever in the vicinity. Kirtland has a \$7.5 billion economic impact for Albuquerque and surrounding communities. That is about 10% of the local economy. Kirtland also accounts for almost 6% of local area jobs. KAFB has ongoing community outreach projects via STEM education programs and career fairs. They are also creating an enhanced use corridor along Gibson by moving the base fencing back to allow for development by outside businesses that will build shops, banks and other operations and facilities that will, ultimately, improve relationships and accommodate base residents, contractors and all of the related functions. Kirtland Base certainly has an interesting history, and a lot of critical defense related missions that were unknown to most of us before today. We appreciate Colonel Wyrick coming this morning and educating us long-term, but obviously unaware, locals.

- ◆ Board Members note that there will be a meeting right after breakfast on May 20th. If you have any questions, please contact Mario or President Jerry.

Badge Board Greeters

- May 13th Johnny Carroll—ABQ Headshot & Portrait
- May 20th Todd LeCesne—Althera Alternative Care
- May 27th **No Meeting—Memorial Day Holiday**
- June 3rd Robert Schuerman—Medical & Commercial Communications
- June 10th Nestor Romero—The Payroll Company

Scheduled Speakers

- May 13th Jerry Schalow—Rio Rancho Regional Chamber of Commerce
- May 20th Lawrence Herrera—The Performance Ranch
- May 27th **No Meeting—Memorial Day Holiday**
- June 3rd Rich Ringrose—Albuquerque City Lifestyle Magazine
- June 10th Randy Allen—Next Level

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