

HOME AND GARDEN

You wouldn't know it to look at them, but these handmade baskets are creating a nationwide sensation. Get in on the fun (and take home your handiwork) at Basket Fest.

Basket cases



Herald/STEVE TRAYNOR

Staff member Randy Pope helps 3-year-old Cassandra Phebus of Colorado Springs with her basket during the Fort Hood Basket Fest on Friday. Phebus and her mother, Angela, joined hundreds of others to receive lessons on how to make the baskets from the Longaberger Basket Co.

By Desiree Johnson
Killeen Daily Herald

In the middle of Newark, Ohio, tucked among the trees and flowered landscaping sits a 9,000-ton basket with 150-ton handles.

Each day, 500 employees gather in the famous home office of the Longaberger basket company, which has been bringing hand-woven baskets to the public for more than 30 years.

All the products the company has to offer can be seen and experienced at Basket Fest, which runs from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Oct. 12-20 in the Abrams Physical Fitness Center, Building 23001, on Fort Hood.

A replica of the company's medium market basket, Longaberger's building is 160 times wider, taller and longer than the original basket itself. The home office, however, is only the beginning. The company also boasts the world's largest apple basket in Frazeytsburg, Ohio, home of the Longaberger Homestead and Basketmaking campus.

These are people who absolutely love their baskets.

Longaberger's history began in 1896 when the Longaberger family moved to Dresden, Ohio. J.W. Longaberger began his career at the Dresden Basket Factory when baskets were as common as plastic bags are today. He mastered the art of tight, precise weaving that would eventually become his trademark.



Herald/STEVE TRAYNOR

Visitors learn how to make their baskets from the dozens of stations throughout the Abrams gym on Fort Hood.

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