

December 2005

December 2005

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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January 2006

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
			December 1	2	3
			EB	EB	N/A
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2:00pm Training with Matt		2:00pm Training with Matt			6
EB	EB	EB	EB	N/A	7
					8
					9
					10
					11
					N/A
					12
10:00am Update on Executive Director Staff Meeting (Board Room)					13
EB	EB	EB	EB	EB	14
					15
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					17
					18
					N/A
					19
10:00am Staff Meeting (Conference Room)	10:00am Staff Meeting (Conference Room)				20
N/A EB	EB	EB	N/A	N/A	21
					22
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					24
					Christmas Eve (United States)
					Holiday
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					Christmas Day (United States)
					Holiday
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					31
					New Year's Eve (United States)
					Holiday
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 1, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Team examines Cannon for future missions

Military Identity Confusion

BRAC still considers Stewart for Army Reserve training center

Southcom faces tab for buffer zone

Five military sites studied for potential new airport

Congressman Kolbe to retire in 2006

Additional Notes

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Team examines Cannon for future missions

The Associated Press
November 30, 2005

CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. (AP) - An Air Force team has begun evaluating facilities at Cannon Air Force Base.

The evaluation will help the Defense Department decide what the base might become in the future.

The independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted in August to move Cannon's three F-16 fighter squadrons elsewhere, reducing the base to an enclave.

If a new mission can't be found by December 31st, 2009, Cannon will close, taking with it as many as 4,700 jobs on and off the base.

The Pentagon this spring recommended closing the base as part of its plan to streamline military installations throughout the country, but commissioners have said Cannon is valuable and could have a future use.

Military Identity Confusion

Washington Post
William N. Arkin
November, 30 2005

In these days of identity theft, one can never be too careful.

So isn't it a little strange that the Pentagon's Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA) can write a "special report" on "Production and Use of Fraudulent Military Identification Cards" and never even mention this rampant problem?

Or that the 18 year old doofus' in uniform constantly seem to loose their IDs?

Or that in an era when the U.S. military has hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who can not legally drink alcohol, false ID's are common?

No, to the Defense Department's new domestic spymasters, "genuine-looking ID cards could be exploited by terrorists to gain entry onto DoD installations."

Yesterday I wrote about domestic intelligence and surveillance being conducted by the military under the guise of "force protection" and "counter-intelligence." It is so hard to put any meat on the bones here, to actually prove that the military increasingly pries into the lives of Americans.

In the overall scheme of things, the fact that some DOD law enforcement entity is monitoring the proliferation of counterfeit identification documents in this digital age is unremarkable. But reading the CIFA "For Official Use Only" June 2005 report (pdf) -- revealed here for the first time and the first ever CIFA report to make it into the public domain -- I'm again struck by the agency's over-reach, by a post 9/11 shift in mentality that not only seeks to catch any anomaly or activity that could signal the next World Trade Center, but also a mindset where government agents lost in a wilderness of mirrors can see common crime or even lawful protest as some dastardly cover for terrorism.

The report is prepared by CIFA West, the Colorado-based affiliate of the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the military's new homeland defense super-command.

In the report on military ID cards, here are the three cases CIFA cites:

On 26 Jul 05, three individuals were observed in a restaurant in Yukon, OK, using a laptop computer to produce what appeared to be military ID cards (DD Form 2, US Uniformed Services Retiree ID Card and possibly Common Access Cards). The three individuals were also attempting to use a computer program to change the date of birth on other forms of identification as well (NFI).

On 15 Jun 05, two US Persons (USPERs) were stopped for a traffic violation near Selfridge Air National Guard Base, MI. During the course of the subsequent investigation, multiple items used for counterfeiting military ID cards were seized. The items included 14 sheets of Kodak inkjet photo paper imprinted with the front and back of a DD Form 1173, (Uniformed Service Identification and Privilege Card), four laptop computers, one laminating machine, multiple laminating pouches, one Polaroid camera, and photographs of one of the individuals.

In Mar 05, a USPER was arrested in KS for passing forged/counterfeit traveler's checks. The USPER was in possession of fraudulent military ID cards, blank ID forms, as well as various cards with his photo with different personal information. IDs with other individuals' names and photos were also saved on his computer. The USPER apparently used his laptop computer and portable printer to produce fraudulent military ID cards and traveler's checks...

Sounds pretty common criminal and innocent to me, but in the world of data miners searching for signs of the next big one, the new mentality is that nothing is innocent, nothing is merely criminal. CIFA reports that

"During the period 1 Jan 05 - 27 Jul 05, a total of 26 suspicious incidents involving the production and use of fraudulent military ID cards were reported in the Cornerstone and AFOSI [Air Force Office of Special Investigations] databases. Of these reports, three revealed the use of computers and/or stolen forms with the intent to produce fraudulent military ID cards. Seven of the reports described the use of fraudulent military documents. The remaining 16 reports dealt with the use of fraudulent drivers' licenses, immigration ID cards, Social Security cards, and other miscellaneous ID cards."

The report writers conclude that "there are no known efforts by foreign entities or adversaries to obtain CAC [common access card] technology" and that "the production and use of fraudulent military ID cards is a small, but significant, portion of a widespread proliferation of counterfeit identification documents."

In other words, there is no real reason to remark upon this non-problem and no sign of terrorism. But in the ways of bureaucracies, CIFA West has to do something, and reports fill quotas and show activities even if it is wasted energy and a seductive mirage.

"Counter-intelligence," according to the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Joint Pub 1-02, 12 April 2001, as amended Through 31 August 2005), is defined as:

"Information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted by or on behalf of foreign governments or elements thereof, foreign organizations, or foreign persons, or international terrorist activities."

Thanks to MS for pointing out the reach that is required to define CIFA's monitoring of anything that has to do with military security as being a "counter-intelligence" problem. To be counter-intelligence, CIFA must justify its interest in domestic matters as having some link to foreign involvement AND some plausible link to espionage or sabotage.

But as I said yesterday, despite its name, CIFA is also a law enforcement organization, the super "defense criminal investigative" Czar, a new all-seeing, all-knowing entity that is constantly on the lookout for terrorists. The motto on the report's cover -- "Protecting the Homeland" - is chilling to me because of the confusion with regard to the very definition of counter-intelligence. I'm not saying government lawyers aren't doing their jobs, or that CIFA isn't filled with patriotic and conscientious staffers who want no part of spying on Americans.

The problem is that there is good reason for a wall between law enforcement and intelligence, one that has been increasingly eroded since 9/11, and one that is falling in the military as well. I'm working on an NBC Nightly News piece that is scheduled to air later this week that shows how CIFA and the military "force protectors" are already poking their noses into places they shouldn't be.

A slight correction to yesterday's blog, thanks to BM: The Army's Criminal

Investigative Division is actually called the Criminal Investigation Command (CIDC), though it is still commonly referred to as CID. And unlike the Air Force and Navy organizations, which combine counter-intelligence and law enforcement into one organization, in the Army, counter-intelligence is under military intelligence, the 902nd Military Intelligence Brigade in the United States, to be exact.

BM points out that the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission has recommended moving the three service investigative arms to Quantico, VA under a plan to consolidate the military criminal investigative organizations. I'm all for government efficiencies, but this smells like one big domestic military Gestapo.

BRAC still considers Stewart for Army Reserve training center

Hudson Valley News
December, 1 2005

The federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission is apparently still reviewing its options regarding the possible placement of a large scale Army Reserves and Army National Guard training center adjacent to Stewart Airport at Newburgh.

The facility, which would serve some 500 reservists, would replace smaller local armories in the region, said Stewart Airport President Charles Seliga.

"It's motor pools, it's signally, it's support units," he said. "Because the Air National Guard is here, if there were a call up again, it had the where with all to use the Guard for its transport." The New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing is based at Stewart with a fleet of giant C-5A cargo planes.

Seliga said the \$40 million Army Reserves training center, if built, would be a significant economic shot in the arm for the

Hudson Valley with some 500 personnel assigned for training and no barracks planned. That means area hotels and motels and local eateries would expect to do a bang up business.



Southcom faces tab for buffer zone

John T. Fakler
South Florida Business Journal
November 28, 2005

Taxpayers will shell out \$12.7 million because the U.S. Southern Command doesn't want a Drug Enforcement Agency lab in the security buffer zone of its Doral headquarters.

The settlement comes amid speculation about where Southcom will go when its lease runs out in 2008. It was reached in an unusual federal court case that saw Southcom sue over the DEA's leasehold interest in 19.45 acres.

The victor in the suit was a Tennessee limited partnership called GPA-Buffer, which was represented by land use attorney Albert Dotson Jr. and litigator Alvin D. Lodish of Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price & Axelrod LLP in Miami.

The \$12.7 million gives Southcom a buffer through Feb. 29, 2008, the same year the lease runs out on its headquarters building. Amid widespread base closure plans, South Florida business leaders have been fighting to keep Southcom, which carries both

prestige, a hefty payroll of 1,200 employees and an economic impact that has been estimated at more than \$167 million a year.

Gov. Jeb Bush's staff has outlined a proposal to build a new Southcom office on 40 acres of state-owned land near the current headquarters. The state would pay a private contractor to build the site, but recoup it through a 10-year lease. However, a base closure study issued by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) in July said the Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG) deemed the cost of relocation too high.

The settlement covers the cost of the government's use of the land going back to 2000, when the case was filed.

The government had estimated the value of the land was \$966,000 a year and had deposited \$5.47 million. The settlement was for \$7.22 million more - not surprising, given rapidly rising land values in South Florida.

The settlement does not say how much Southcom would have to pay for a lease on the buffer if it renews its headquarters lease, but the judgment pointedly says that the payments outlined under the settlement can't be construed to represent the land's market value.

Why Southcom was opposed to having the DEA in its security buffer is unclear.

Southcom did not reply to two requests for comment and Andrew Goldfrank, the plaintiff's attorney with the U.S. Land Acquisition Department in Washington, D.C., could not be reached. The Bilzin Sumberg attorneys said they don't know what the problem is either.

The recent settlement ended a five-year legal squabble that had embroiled Southcom, which provides operational command and control for all U.S. land, sea and air activities in the Southern Hemisphere and the Caribbean.

The case was structured as one agency of the federal government (Southcom) condemning a partial leasehold interest of another agency of the federal government (the DEA), Dotson and Lodish said.

While the attorneys said they think Southcom will remain at its current location after its lease extension is up, they acknowledge the government group could still leave.

Unique case

The motion for summary judgment was the first in the Southern District of Florida in a federal condemnation case, the lawyers said.

Memphis, Tenn., investor Oscar Seelbinder managed two limited partnerships, GPA-Buffer LP and GPA I LP, that encompass the land under Southcom's headquarters and the buffer.

"When Southcom first moved here from Panama, it only sought to lease an office building, then determined it needed additional land for a security buffer," Dotson said.

His client's companies had the right to seek other government entities to construct on the land and sought to bring in the DEA. The DEA was looking to construct high-tech regional laboratories.

"We were successful in securing the lease part of the vacant land," he said. "When we looked at the DEA, we thought it would be a good complement to Southcom."

Dotson said he isn't sure why the military didn't just take over the lease, rather than make it a condemnation case against the DEA.

He said that, to his knowledge, the Miami location is the only unified command center operating on private land.

"We didn't find too much [legal] precedent of one agency that could impact the plans of another agency," Dotson said.

Southcom's move from Panama to Doral was a great jewel for this community, he said, noting that because of the short-term arrangement, it's still possible Southcom could move in 2008.

The GAO report sheds little light on why the ISG rejected the recommendation to relocate Southcom from its leased space in Miami to another state-owned leased space.

Keith Ashdown, VP for policy and communications of Taxpayers for Common Sense, in Washington, D.C., reviewed the report and said: "They're not saying it was more expensive [to move to new land], but that there were some costs [associated with the move] that were too expensive."

Initial deal questioned

What's clear is Southcom was desired in the Miami area as an economic engine.

"There was a full-court press in the county to get Southcom relocated to Miami-Dade," said John Schelble, chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek, D-Miami Gardens, adding he was unfamiliar with the lawsuit. "Everybody wanted it when they were leaving Panama. We were the logical place to locate."

At that time, however, there was a question about where Southcom would locate the headquarters, and whether it would be leased or built.

"The price tag was \$25 million at that time. Each year, it went up. There was a reluctance of some in Congress on the House Appropriations Committee to provide the money to construct the headquarters for Southcom," Schelble said.

He said the concern in Congress included an attempt to purchase the land over a period of a couple of years, "but there were concerns about whether they would continue in Miami-Dade and the future, whether it would be collocated with another command center or whether they would even be folded in [to another]."

That went on for several years and Meek worked closely with Cmdr. Gen. James Hill and the leadership of Southcom to show what a strategic asset for the United States the Miami location was, Schelble said, adding that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) report went a long way in settling those concerns.

BRAC left Southcom in South Florida when it proposed closing down 33 major facilities in 22 states in May. The GAO report cited BRAC as spurning an idea to move the headquarters from a leased building to state land "because costs associated with the relocation were too high."

"That was the opportunity to relocate the command," Schelble said. "They chose to keep Southcom where it is."

A 50-acre buffer zone is now in place, so security isn't an issue, he said.

"It [expense] is always a concern," he said. "The largest concerns are its strategic considerations. I think the determining [land] issue was BRAC. You want to keep a cap on expenses. The state provided a 50-acre buffer zone within the last few years. They [Southcom] have a requirement to have buffers on all sides, and they took care of a side they didn't have control of."

Schelble said he did not know where the DEA planned to house its facilities.

To a query asking whether he thought the land was or was not a waste of taxpayer dollars, Schelble said the buffer is a necessity.

"You can't have a command center without appropriate security measures."

Five military sites studied for potential new airport

Union Tribune
November, 30 2005

SAN DIEGO – Five regional military installations should be studied as potential locations for a new San Diego airport, a site selection advisory group recommended Wednesday.

The Airport Site Selection Program Public Working Group voted 8-5 to recommend that the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority study the military sites, spokeswoman Diana Lucero said. Four members abstained.

The airport authority's nine-member board is expected to take up the issue at its meeting Monday, Lucero said.

Considered as possible military sites for a new airport are Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Miramar East, Camp Pendleton,

Naval Air Station North Island and March Air Reserve Base in Riverside County.

Study of the locations was withheld by the airport authority pending the outcome of the Defense Department's recent base realignment and closure process. None of the proposed military installations made the list.

Citing air space issues and other concerns, the military has indicated it is opposed to any civilian use of bases for an airport.

Military officials made a presentation against study of the installations before the advisory group Wednesday, Lucero said. A similar presentation will be made at the airport authority board's meeting on Monday.

A public vote is slated for next November on a location for a new airport. The airport authority, which operates San Diego International Airport, is charged with studying the proposed sites.

Also under consideration are sites in Boulevard, the Imperial County desert and an expansion of Lindbergh Field.

Congressman Kolbe to retire in 2006

Wick News (Arizona)
Bill Hess
November, 30 2005

SIERRA VISTA - U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe's announcement Wednesday that he will not seek a 12th term representing Southern Arizona came as a surprise to many people.

Local residents involved in Republican politics said there will be a scramble to seek the party's nod next year.

"It's going to be a Republican blood bath. It's going to be a feeding frenzy," said Judy Gignac, a longtime Kolbe supporter.

Local leaders also say his retirement could have an impact on issues such as water and Fort Huachuca.

During a 15-minute telephone press interview with media outlets in Arizona, Kolbe said his decision to retire is not because of any concerns that he could not win the 2006 primary and general elections.

"I'm 63 and I've always wanted to teach and do some consulting," he said.

Additionally, because of term limits in being the chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, Kolbe has to give up the chair at the end of this term.

"Not being the chairman of the subcommittee is a factor," he said, adding some GOP leaders of the House have asked him to reconsider. He said no.

With his retirement, it leaves a wide open race for the congressional seat.

Gignac said Randy Graf, the only person who has announced Republican primary candidate, should not think he's a shoo-in. She does not support Graf's candidacy.

In 2004, Graf ran against Kolbe in the primary, carrying Cochise County but failing to pull other Republicans, primarily in Pima County, to his cause.

Graf will find himself "in an extremely different minefield," said Gignac, former Cochise County supervisor and member of the Arizona Board of Regents.

If Graf pulls off a primary victory, she said she cannot see how moderate Republicans like herself will vote for him in the general election next November.

The seat could go to a Democrat, Gignac said, noting a viable candidate for the Democratic nod is current state Sen. Gabrielle Giffords.

"Randy is too far right," Gignac said, adding moderate Republicans may switch party allegiance if an extreme right-winger is elected.

But Graf said he sees Kolbe's retirement announcement as a plus, although he recognizes the battle for the party's nod will now take a different thrust.

"It (the retirement announcement) obviously changes the focus," he said.

Instead of having an incumbent's congressional record to assail, he said what he will have to do to win the primary is show why he is better in addressing issues like securing the border, national security, keeping taxes low, education and health care.

"We're excited about it," Graf said about the wider open primary.

Jane Strain, who was Kolbe's Cochise County team leader for his 2004 primary and general elections, said she received a call from the congressman around 10:30 a.m. Wednesday. His announcement about not running again was a surprise, she said.

Like Gignac, Strain said Kolbe's decision will create a large field of Republicans wanting to replace him.

Strain, who also doesn't support Graf, said Graf will have to find another main subject besides "border issues" to talk about.

Graf had no part in Kolbe's decision to retire, she said.

Graf will find it difficult to win over more-qualified Republicans, those who have not run against Kolbe because of the good job the 11-term congressman has done, Strain said.

"Randy Graf is finished," she declared. "He's going to get lost in the dust."

Another person who sees "a lot of people jumping into the (GOP primary) pool" is Randy Groth, who leads the University of Arizona South and is the Arizona aide to the Secretary of the Army.

Kolbe's decision came as a surprise to him.

"He's done a good job," Groth said.

During his time in Congress, Kolbe has help provide funds for many important projects, he said.

Gignac said the loss of seniority could spell problems for Southern Arizona. "Freshmen (members of Congress) on one side or the other have little power," she said.

That was disputed by Gail Griffin, who said when she was a freshman member of the Arizona House of Representatives she was able to get 13 of her 16 bills passed.

Saying she is not a candidate to replace Kolbe, the Cochise County Republican Committee chair said whomever wins the party's nod will have to be for less government, support free enterprise and represent the party's principles.

Like Graf, she said the issues facing the voters of Congressional District 8 are immigration, tax cuts, balancing the budget, affordable health care and education.

Noting Graf came close in the 2004 primary, Griffin said she is not surprised Kolbe decided to retire. But she disagrees with Gignac when it comes to the 2006 primary.

"I don't think it's going to be bloody," Griffin said.

During the telephone press conference, Kolbe said at a certain point during a person's life "it becomes time to hang up the spurs."

But with 13 months still left in his 11th term, he promised to continue working and supporting the constituents of the district. Part of the promise will be to ensure the Upper San Pedro Partnership receives funding, and Fort Huachuca is protected, Kolbe said.

Sierra Vista City Manager Chuck Potucek said Kolbe's retirement "is a big loss for the entire district."

During his more than two decades of work in Congress, Kolbe has had an excellent staff, Potucek said. Kolbe has been a great supporter of the fort and the partnership, he added.

Cochise County Board of Supervisors Chairman Pat Call agreed Kolbe's retirement will impact the partnership.

As the vice chairman of the partnership, Call said over the years Kolbe has ensured the organization has obtained millions of dollars for projects. The congressman also has been

instrumental in ensuring the fort was protected, he added.

With Kolbe's departure, "that's a single loss to the water issue and the next BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure process)," Call said.

Call said the frightening thing is that when Kolbe's tenure ends after 22 years, there will be an open seat "and we don't know who's going to fill it."

(Editor's Note: Bill Hess is the senior reporter at the Sierra Vista Herald and can be reached by email at

Opinions/ Editorials

Additional Notes

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 2, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Funding approved

Oceana working group to report to governor by mid-December

Base continues to add on

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Funding approved

Enid News (Oklahoma)

Robert Barron - Staff Writer

December 2, 2005

The city of Enid will receive \$225,000 to help fund a water line project for Vance Air Force Base.

The funding was approved Thursday by the Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning

Commission, the state's military base protection and enhancement group.

Mike Cooper, chairman of the state group and a member of the Vance Development Authority, said the water line will provide the base with a redundant water source, so it will have backup water source.

The group also approved \$200,000 for the city of Altus to assist with improvements in that city's industrial park. The improvements will help Altus look forward to base expansion, Cooper said.

"If you look at the protection and enhancement efforts that came through our state commission, they have helped us," Cooper said. "We not only came through BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure Commission) unscathed, but helped keep our local, state and federal delegation working together.

"That allows the military services to make decisions for further expansions. That's why this group is important," he said.

The group was formed by Gov. Brad Henry to help Oklahoma military base communities protect themselves from closure or realignment.

Oceana working group to report to governor by mid-December

Associated Press

December 2, 2005

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- A group appointed by the governor to address the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations for Oceana Naval Air Station is expected to present The South Hampton Roads BRAC Working Group has been evaluating the impact on military facilities throughout the region of the BRAC Commission's requirements for the Virginia Beach base.

The group was to have given its findings and recommendations to Governor Mark Warner by today. Warner spokesman Kevin Hall says the group was granted its request for additional time.

The group is made up of state and local politicians, business executives and military officials.

The federal BRAC commission decided in August to move the Navy's East Coast master jet base to Florida unless Virginia officials took steps to reverse development around Oceana.

Base continues to add on

Battle Creek Enquirer
Trace Christenson
December, 2 2005

The buildings just keep coming at Battle Creek's Michigan Air National Guard Base. In a brief ceremony Thursday, base officials officially opened a remodeled 15,000-square-foot Security Forces Facility.

The \$1.6 million project is the latest in more than \$30 million in construction and remodeling projects at the base since 1991.

But the base was targeted to be shut down in the summer by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, a decision that later was rescinded.

After cutting a red ribbon in front of the building, Col. Rodger Sidel, the base commander, said plans are under way to build a \$7.4 million Civil Engineering Squadron

Facility and remodel and expand the base fire station, a \$4 million project. Both projects are set to begin in the next few months.

"And about six months ago we were about to lock the gates," Sidel said, referring to BRAC.

The Security Forces Facility, which was expanded by 7,000 square feet, will house about 75 people who provide law enforcement and security services on the base, said Major Robert DeCoster, a spokesman for the 110th Fighter Wing, housed at W.K. Kellogg Airport. The building includes a firearms training simulator used by all base personnel.

"This all is through the support of federal, state and local elected and other officials," DeCoster said. "They have been very supportive."

Battle Creek City Manager Wayne Wiley and representatives of U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Detroit, and U.S. Rep. Joe Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, were among the dignitaries at the ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Ken Heaton, assistant adjutant general for the Michigan Air National Guard and a former base commander in Battle Creek, said 25 years ago the base was still using all World War II facilities.

"We have slowly put this base together," he said. "Now it is a magnificent showcase."

Heaton said the investment in the base helped sway BRAC Commissioner Samuel K. Skinner to recommend that the base remain open.

"We know the 110th is staying here," Heaton said.

"It was noticed," DeCoster said about the projects, "and it helped impress Secretary Skinner about the value of what we have and what we do."

Opinions/ Editorials

Additional Notes

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 05, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

New Orleans reservists heading back home Departures will take place over the next few Weeks.

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici R-N.M. talks about issues concerning eastern New Mexico during an interview Friday at the Clovis.

Army investigating Newport facility Site of VX destruction being scoured before possible handover to local government.

Oceana's fate looms over planned overhaul of resort.

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

New Orleans reservists heading back home Departures will take place over the next few Weeks.

Shreveport Times
John Andrew Prime
December 4, 2005

Like cousins headed home after a holiday visit, members of the Air Force Reserve's 926th Fighter Wing at Belle Chasse, near New Orleans, have started to return to the hurricane-ravaged base they left as Hurricane Katrina struck three months ago.

For Lt. Col. Ozzie Gorbitz, a pilot and air operations officer for the wing's 706th Fighter Squadron, the "Cajuns," the departure some time over the next two weeks will be bittersweet. He's eager to get back to work making the base a beehive of activity again, but he and his family have grown used to the friendliness and beauty of Barksdale Air Force Base.

"My two boys, ages 5 and 7, call this 'the great summer of fun,'" he said. "After we spent time living in hotels, we bought a 26-foot travel trailer and have lived in the family camp on the base. They've grown to love the playgrounds, the lakes and the woods."

Since early September, Gorbitz and other essential headquarters personnel, pilots, maintainers and most of the 926th's A-10 fighters, have shared ramp and office space with Barksdale's 917th Wing. In mid-November, the first people and airplanes started to head back south. Two weeks from now, the 80 or so remaining Belle Chasse folks at the base now will be but a memory.

"It's not a big departure," said Master Sgt. Jessica D'Aurizio, the 917th Wing's public affairs chief. "It's in onesies and twosies. They hop in a car and leave."

One who has already returned to a dried-out Belle Chasse is Capt. Christopher Vicari, the 926th's performance planner. In October, He was one of the first to return and was surprised to find many Army and Coast Guard personnel at what had been mostly an Air Force and Navy base. Technically, it's called Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, New Orleans, and is home to Louisiana Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force Reserve, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs Service and Navy personnel.

"It was awesome," said Vicari, 38, father of four. "There were uniformed personnel everywhere on this base. Every square inch was occupied, either by a tent or a vehicle. The lifeline to the area was the military, and this was where they were."

The changes at his base, and what his unit had experienced and learned from its forced evacuation, intrigue him.

"Militarily, we learned about accountability -- getting good alternate phone numbers, maintaining communications," he said.

Gorbitz concurred. "You have got to have a few cell phones in the organization that aren't tied to the same area code as the one you're leaving," he said. "I think that's applicable to all homeland security planning, and I would apply that to family members as well. Fortunately my wife has a New Mexico cell phone, so we had one of the few that worked. And we put thousands of minutes on that."

The forced marriage of the two units, at least for a few months, afforded a unique opportunity in light of the decision by the most recent Base Closure and Realignment Commission to stand down the 926th and divide its airplanes between Barksdale and Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri.

"This presented an opportunity for many of the maintenance people and operation folks to decide if they liked it and wanted to live here, and for the leadership of the 917th to look at what our folks had to offer," Gorbitz said.

And the leadership of the 917th Wing has taken note of its brethren from the Crescent City.

"Even though the 926th Fighter Wing from New Orleans came here under stressful and unfortunate circumstances, it has been great working with them," said Col. Bob Tarter, the 917th Wing's commander. "The experience has strengthened our working relationship and increased the bond between the two units. With the upcoming BRAC transitions that we are facing, it has helped both organizations in advancing our knowledge of the respective operations. This will ultimately be beneficial for all of us."

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici R-N.M. talks about issues concerning eastern New Mexico during an interview Friday at the Clovis

Clovis News Journal.

Marlena Hartz

December, 4 2005

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., was in the region on Thursday and Friday and was present for a briefing at Clovis Community College with Air Force officials. The Air Force visited the area for four days to begin the process of finding a new mission for Cannon Air Force Base.

Domenici has been in the Senate longer than any other New Mexican, and is chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

He is also a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, and the U.S. Senate Committee on Budget.

He sat down with staff from the Clovis News Journal and the Portales News-Tribune to answer questions on Friday morning.

How many sessions have you had with the new secretary of the Air Force and what is his take on Cannon?

I've had conversations with the Secretary of Defense about Cannon. One of them was to share with him the words that are in the BRAC, which say "shall seek a new mission." And he clearly understands them. I'm confident that when you tell a secretary of defense that you shall seek a mission that's very important. And I think that is what they are doing. ... As far as the Secretary of the Air Force, I have only talked to him once ... That's where we are now.

What impressions about Cannon did you get from the viewpoint of the secretary of the Air Force during your one conversation?

None of them (Air Force or Department of Defense officials) are committal, other than to say that this is a great base; they all know that. And everybody along the line is saying they are going to do their best — "We know what BRAC said, we know what your interest is (the say)." I am doing everything I can and I feel very comfortable with what I am doing.

Air Force officials have said they face challenges of antiquated equipment and a shrinking force. What do you envision as the future of the Air Force?

There is a lot of change occurring (in the Air Force). The biggest one has to do with long range and long term anti-terrorism (issues) in the broadest sense. Special operations kinds of activities are the ones being looked at in terms of the future.

Can you discuss the differences between the Base Realignment and Closure process, which targets installations for closure and realignment, and the new Cannon mission-finding process occurring now?

I am not involved with details (involving the procedures of the Air Force team recently assigned to prepare a report on Cannon's assets). Nobody would do anything (involving Cannon) until the BRAC date was up. That's 2 1/2 weeks ago — nobody would talk to anybody until then. So, it's not three months.

Whatever they were doing, every time you would talk to (Air Force officials) they would say "No dice until that point." So, it's not like we've been having a bunch of exchanges. There was nothing to exchange. On the other hand, that does not mean they weren't doing things. I have every reason to believe they were. That they were looking very carefully at some things.

Did Arizona Sen. John McCain, in efforts to protect his interests, have anything to do with Cannon being put on the BRAC list as has been rumored?

All I know is that the Secretary of Defense is ... in my opinion, and has always been for me, a very honest, forthright man. On more than one occasion, he has told me there is no politics involved (in BRAC). ... But who knows. Humans are humans, and there may have been within that process rubbing of shoulders, comments, whispering. I don't know about any of that.

When do you think Cannon could have a new mission?

We heard months. I don't think that means a year. ... I think it will be less than (a year). I think they want to (find a mission expeditiously). I think our chances (of finding a mission) are not enhanced by delay. But, you know ... I am trying my best to tell you, I am not a military planner, I am not a military expert. ... It seems to me things will be more stabilized in a year.

What if the people of Clovis and Portales don't want a mission the Air Force team recommends for Cannon?

I don't think the military is going to shove anything down our throats. This is ... going to have to be a very joint partnership, as it's always been.

Will the process of finding a new mission be more open than the BRAC process was? BRAC is kind of non-transparent by definition. Clearly, this (mission-finding process) is going to be eons more transparent (than BRAC). ... Before decisions are made (about Cannon), there will be plenty known, plenty of the results and evaluation results will be forthcoming. That does

not mean anybody's going to sit in a room and ... invite Pete Domenici or Gen. (military base planner Hanson) Scott into a decision on their meetings. But neither are they going to bring a big surprise tomorrow and say "Hey, we are doing this." We will be a part of that.

Two BRAC commissioners recessed from voting on Cannon for personal reasons. The number of votes needed to remove a base from the list, however, remained the same — five. How do you feel about that and is there anything that can be done about it?

We (the congressional delegates) looked into (the recusal issue) ourselves. The conclusion we came up with is that you couldn't do anything about it. That's not challengeable. The commission itself was unhappy, too. They looked into it, but everybody's final decision was that they make their rules, and that's it.

Brig. Gen. Ron Ladnier, leader of the Air Force team that visited the region last week, volunteered a personal opinion about the future of Cannon at the Clovis Community College briefing, saying there would be a new mission for the base. How optimistic should supporters be?

I don't know what (his statement) means. ... They (the Air Force team) kept telling us (the congressional delegates) they're a fact-finding group. They're going to produce a product not a policy. So, what does the opinion of a fact-finder have to do with a policy? I just kind of think it (his opinion) doesn't have a big impact, but nonetheless it could have an impact on what they produce. ... If they have to write a conclusion about a facility, they can't be saying we recommend this, but they could be saying how they feel.

Can you explain the evolution of the fact-finding Air Force team?

I have no way of knowing.

Is anybody else going to come to the region for Cannon evaluation purposes?

I am not aware of a team like this (planning a visit). But I wouldn't be at all surprised if from time to time people come in here. I don't think they will be coming in that manner, with a big

hearing and participation. But there's gotta be some specifics that are gonna be addressed by people within the defense department.

What are your predictions for the future of the Ute Water Project?

I think you know that the authorization for that goes to our committee (Committee on Energy and Natural Resources) and I have already agreed that I will introduce the bill; I will be the sponsor, which means it will get through the Senate. Then we will work with the House and it should happen.

But here's the problem: There is no source of money, there is no pot, there is no water resource revolving fund. ... And so, you know, the price (of the project) has been going up, and it's big. I have never been able to honestly tell the delegation that comes and visits that I know where to get the money. What I have said is that I will do everything I can, and I will. You know that there will have to be a match (of funds for the project). We all (federal, state, and local authorities) have to come up with some money. And the base (of money contributors) for the Ute (Water Project) has been shrinking because people have been dropping off. ...

I think it's best for me to be absolutely forthright. We can put this on the books of the United States government as something that we have authorized to be done. But, I don't think we are going to quickly be able to say we have appropriated money. We might even have to take steps because most (water projects like this) are done in pieces. It takes a nice chunk of money for planning and designing.

Does eastern New Mexico have any other water options for the future?

I am asking the local people and the experts and they don't know of any other options. So, we just have to work on this and we have to put all our strength to it and see what we can move. ... I will do that. It's just that I know which pot of money, which appropriation bill, it comes out of. ... It does come within the jurisdiction of the committee on energy and water, which I appropriate every year. ... I don't want to leave it on this depressing (note). I've got to try to find a

way, but I don't see it right now. Let's get it in there (Congress, as an authorized project) and get it passed, as a first step. I've made that commitment and that can be done.

Where do you stand on immigration issues?
 ...The big problem of the pressure of people that can't make a living, and are moving with their feet, is still there. (President Bush) proposed some things and got burned and got off the issues. How did he get burned? He got burned because whenever he talks about worker permits many of his strong supporters think he is ignoring making the border safe. ... We (the American government) took the lead within the last year and a half, and put in huge amounts of money that (Bush) didn't have, which he talked about in his speech — 2,000 new beds, 1,500 new agents, new robotics all aimed at trying to make (the border) less porous.

The president knows that you can't just button up the border. You have to have a policy with reference to the rest of (the immigration issue). There are 9 to 11 million illegal Mexicans, Guatemalans, Central Americans (in the U.S.) Anybody who runs around and says we are going to throw them all out is just dreaming. They are everywhere. They are not just in Clovis and Albuquerque. They are in Ohio. And they are not just on the farms. ... They're automobile mechanics, and then you have people in Maryland saying they are building all the houses. ...

So the president was always trying to put that into the mix, and now he finally in this speech said "OK, we've got to (find a work program and tighten border security)," but right now we've gotta emphasize putting in the resources to try to control the border. I myself don't think (Bush) nor we have done enough about that."

Should immigrants be granted citizenship status? I am not bashful to tell you some of the things I want to do people are not going to like. But I think I am going to be a realist because I don't think we oughta tell the American people we are going to round these people (immigrants) up and send them home. We oughta button the border up and set a new immigration policy and we

oughta decide what do we give (immigrants) short of citizenship. We shouldn't give them citizenship (just because they are here). You've gotta do something realistic, and at some point send them home. But, when you send them home, I am not saying after three years, maybe two or five years, they've got to be put in line some way to start the process through of becoming a citizen, but they aren't gonna push everybody (else applying for citizenship) out of the way.

America was founded upon its open borders. How do immigrants fit into the American way of life?

Sovereignty is important. ... America is sovereign and you cannot just open (America) up with the disparity in economics because the world would come here. ... So, we have to have (immigration policies) organized. But people who think that America does not need immigrants during this century and as far as we can see — and I mean need in the sense of not menial jobs, such as farming — but we will need workers because our growth patterns and demographics indicate either we are going to need a lot of workers or we will be a dormant, dead economy. ... It's sort of a circle, you gotta have both, you've gotta have growth, you've gotta have them, and if you have them you can have growth. But how you do that in an atmosphere like we've got, that's as tough as an issue as you can get. ... The people have now put these issue high enough where we can't ignore it any longer.

Who will be in the race for president in 2008? I think everybody knows on the Democratic side that it is being said that Hillary Clinton is the front-runner. I understand from our governor (Bill Richardson) that he is going to run even though I think he is sort of saying maybe. I think what that means is he is going to feel his way. There will be a number of Democrats. But I think in the end Hillary Clinton will be the front-runner.

On our (Republican) side, it's a very interesting one because the front-runners are not conservative on the issues of pro-life, same-sex marriage. But probably the two front-runners are

McCain and (former New York Mayor Rudolph) Giuliani. At this particular time, probably Giuliani, even though he hasn't been in the limelight, is ahead. ... So I think it is very open on the Republican side.

There are a couple of governor sleepers on both sides. So, let's go to the Democrats, first. The governor of the state of Virginia... is gaining a lot of momentum... The governor of Arkansas is another Republican sleeper.

What do you think of the latest Supreme Court nominee?

All this late evaluation and news and promotion about his early positions when he was writing letters and saying what the strategy might be on abortion,... (that) will make life tough for him, but I don't think any of them so far are going to be deadly. In my opinion, there will not be a filibuster. I would be surprised if he didn't get more than 55 votes, maybe even 60. And that's because the American people respect qualified people that are put up for these kind of positions. ... I think he's a terrific man from what I can tell.

What does the future hold for Pete Domenici? If I feel like I have been strong and enjoyed my work, then there is no reason I shouldn't run (for Senate) again. But I am not committed either way. I do feel I must finish up my work on nuclear power — there needs to be a strong American policy on how to get rid of (nuclear) waste.

Do you support the Iraq War and do you have a vision on how to end it?

First of all, I would speak to the issue of political antagonism (generated by) the opposition party (Democrats). Predominately the Democratic party is fighting the president, and in particular is carping on whether he told the truth or not (about weapons of mass destruction and reasons that brought us into the war). ... The American people have caught onto that. They don't think that is constructive, they understand that it is political maneuvering. ...

However, I am rather pleased with what's happened in the last month. The Democrats ... have had to try to articulate their position on the

war. And in all actuality, they come closer to the president rather than further (in their views and vision for the war's end): They think we need to train the Iraqi police force, they think Iraqi elections are important.

My take (on the war) is that it is as tough a job as we've ever had. I don't know that the word victory is right, but there is a good chance that we will succeed. ... I believe we will start withdrawing (our troops), in an order of the way, within the next year. A significant withdrawal will be possible then because the Iraqi army will get better. ... In a nutshell, we can succeed. We can't just act as if this is not important to the future of America and the Middle East. Terrorism will be made stronger if America fails.

**Army investigating Newport facility
Site of VX destruction being scoured before
possible handover to local government.**

Indianapolis Star
By Tammy Webber
December, 5 2005

The Army is investigating whether hazardous materials are buried at the Newport Chemical Depot, a military installation where the nation's largest stockpile of VX nerve agent is being destroyed.

Officials want to make sure they know what's on the grounds of the 64-year-old former weapons-production plant because the Army could turn the site over to Vermillion County within the next several years, possibly for use as an industrial park.

HISTORY OF DEPOT

The Newport Chemical Depot located about two miles south of Newport and 70 miles west of Indianapolis, has a long history of manufacturing weapons for the U.S. military:

- 1941: Opens as the Wabash River Ordnance Works.
- 1943-46 and 1951-57: Manufactures plastic explosive RDX.

- 1944-46 and 1952-57: Produces heavy water for development of atomic bombs.
- 1961-68: Manufactures chemical nerve agent VX and fills and ships munitions.
- 1973-74: Produces TNT.

Source: Newport Chemical Depot

A federal panel voted this year to close the depot once the VX is removed and the plant is dismantled. More than 250,000 gallons of VX, stored at the depot since production was halted in 1969, is supposed to be destroyed within three years.

A Base Realignment and Closure Commission report released this year mentioned the possibility that VX munitions are buried at Newport.

Cathy Collins, Newport's chief engineer, said the Army doesn't believe it will turn up VX but is taking extra precautions because of the history of the 7,100-acre facility, where VX and other weapons were produced between 1941 and the mid-1970s.

"We're being as cautious as we can be. We don't want to leave any stone unturned," she said.

The Army is aware of at least four burial areas at Newport, including one site where decontaminated gas masks, gloves, vials and scrap metal from projectiles associated with VX production are buried. Other areas were found to contain waste from production of TNT and other depot operations. The Army conducted extensive groundwater and soil sampling in those areas, and no chemical weapons or residues were found.

A former Newport civilian worker, Tom Burch, said that when VX was produced in the 1960s, depot workers would drain faulty munitions of VX and the liquid would be neutralized before being placed in a well more than a mile below the ground. Burch, who worked as a VX analyst at an Army lab at Newport, said the munitions also were decontaminated before being buried. While Collins and the Army's Chemical Materials Agency downplayed the potential of finding chemical weapons buried at the site, citizen watchdog groups welcomed the investigation.

"Now is the time to take a look and see what else could be there," said Elizabeth Crowe from the Chemical Weapons Working Group, based in Kentucky. "I don't think anyone in the community wants to find anything by accident when (the site) is being developed."

Old chemical weapons have surfaced before -- decades after they were buried. In Spring Valley, a community near American University in Washington, D.C., World War I-era munitions with mustard agent were unearthed during construction of an upscale housing development in the 1990s.

The Army has hired a contractor to help it in the Newport investigation, which includes researching historical records and talking to former employees who might recall where waste was buried, the depot commander, Lt. Col. Scott Kimmell, said.

Surprises aren't unheard of at the depot.

In January, contractors dismantling the old production plant confirmed that liquid found in a small tank was VX -- a drop of which could kill a person in minutes.

Several years ago, a longtime worker told Collins that crews about 20 years earlier had found empty land mines while excavating an old scrap yard at the depot. Army officials determined the mines had been shipped to the depot in the 1960s to be filled with VX. They also concluded the mines were never used.

Because of poor record-keeping, it's difficult to know the location and extent of all contamination at the nation's military bases, and waste often is found at former testing and training sites, said Jeffrey Smart, a historian at the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command in Maryland.

"Most sites, particularly in the World War I and World War II time frame, did not focus on documenting disposal operations," Smart said.

"They focused on production, training and shipment of items, but not really on what to do with ones we don't want.

"They used to think if there was a leaking or old chemical weapon, the best way to make it safe was to bury it six feet underground."

A 1996 Army report listed three Indiana sites -- Newport, Camp Atterbury and Crane Division, Naval Surface Warfare Center -- as areas where chemical warfare waste might have been buried.

At Atterbury, now an Indiana National Guard site, the concern was that mustard agent might have been burned in a small area, leaving harmful residue, and that a small vial found there might contain live chemical agent. But a 1998 study determined there was no chemical weapons contamination, Atterbury officials said. At Crane, one of the nation's largest military arsenals, a chemical weapons burial ground with mustard bombs and some radioactive waste was excavated in the 1970s and 1980s. Groundwater contamination at the site is being monitored, said Tom Linson, an official with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Those sites aren't as great a concern as Newport, because they're not going to be turned over to the public, he said.

But because VX was the only chemical weapon produced in Newport -- the depot also produced heavy water for the nation's first nuclear bombs, TNT and the plastic explosive RDX -- and was produced in the 1960s, the possibility of undocumented chemical weapons is remote, Linson said.

Still, "it is absolutely an issue at Newport because we know the base is destined for closure," Linson said. "We know (the site) will become potential public property, and we can't say there haven't been surprises at Newport. As thorough a job as has been done, we've still found a few things that had been initially overlooked.

"Hopefully, the number of surprises in the future will be small, but we can't rule it out, so we proceed with caution."

Ed Cole, executive director of the Vermillion County Economic Development Council, said he hopes any contamination won't delay the base's transfer to the county.

"This is very important to us, because we are going to have such a drop in employment once the doors close," Cole said of the depot, the county's largest employer. "We plan to get up to speed as soon as we can."

VX and other chemical weapons production was banned in the United States in 1969. VX has since been stored at Newport.

Oceana's fate looms over planned overhaul of resort

The Virginian-Pilot

By JON W. GLASS AND MARISA TAYLOR,
December 4, 2005

VIRGINIA BEACH — The City Council faces a crucial test as it moves this month to protect Oceana Naval Air Station's jets: how to balance the needs of the city's two biggest cash cows, the Navy and the Oceanfront resort. The council is scheduled to vote Dec. 20 on two proposals that illustrate the challenge.

One is an overlay district that would restrict new homes and hotels in jet-noise zones around Oceana, including much of the resort, to satisfy the Navy. The other is a revised master plan for the resort that encourages more of that development.

The city is tugged in two directions because the resort industry rivals Oceana — the city's largest employer — in terms of economic benefits to the local economy. A recent study showed the resort generates about \$785 million a year in tourist spending — roughly the same as Oceana's payroll.

Earlier this year, the city and Navy spent several months on a joint land-use study to resolve their differences. But the study ended in May with no agreement on redevelopment of the resort.

Now, with Oceana's future at stake, city and Navy officials have renewed talks. An urgency exists that did not before: In August, the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission told the city to stop encroaching on Oceana or risk losing the base's jets.

"I think we can arrive at a solution that meets everybody's needs, but there's going to have to be some significant give and take," City Planning Director Robert J. Scott said.

On Tuesday, city planners will present the City Council with a sweeping overhaul plan for the resort. It calls for 3,000 to 5,000 more homes, an entertainment district and a high-end district of shops and condominiums on 19th Street. These are considered crucial to the success of the city's new \$203 million convention center.

Currently, the six blocks between the convention center and the ocean are not linked by continuous sidewalks. They are dominated by older single-family houses and aging apartments and shopping centers.

City officials say more homes are needed to fulfill the dream of a bustling, year-round resort. The city defines the Oceanfront resort as the area from Rudee Inlet to 42nd Street, west to Birdneck Road.

“It’s kind of like Granby Street” in Norfolk’s renewed downtown, said Linwood Branch, president of the Virginia Beach Hotel-Motel Association. “The residential, retail and office feed off each other.”

Much of the resort is in areas where jet noise averages 65 to 75 decibels, but residents and tourists can be exposed to individual jet blasts of greater than 110 decibels, rivaling the noise level of a rock concert.

Until three years ago, the Navy viewed new homes as compatible in most of the resort if they were equipped with sound-muffling features and noise disclosures to buyers.

But since December 2002, in response to a Defense Department effort to curb development around military bases, the Navy has opposed new homes and hotels, saying they are incompatible in all noise zones that exceed 65 decibels.

The Navy now fears that putting more year-round residents at the resort will stir noise complaints and jeopardize Oceana’s mission.

City planners hope to satisfy the Navy with proposed changes to zoning rules that will encourage property owners to redevelop the resort with a mix of homes, shops, restaurants and offices.

Under current zoning rules, if all properties in the resort were redeveloped, there would be about 9,000 new homes. Under the proposed

zoning changes, that number could be cut to about 5,000.

Beyond the resort, the council this month also will review several other proposals to take up Navy concerns and the BRAC Commission’s demands. The council is expected to vote Dec. 20 on a proposed ban on new homes and businesses that the Navy considers incompatible in Accident Potential Zone 1, the area around Oceana where the risk of a jet crash is greatest.

The ban will be considered instead of a plan to condemn and buy existing homes and businesses in APZ-1, as the BRAC Commission had demanded. While the ban is not as controversial as condemnation, some property owners are concerned about having their development rights taken away without compensation.

The City Council also is expected to discuss buying undeveloped land in APZ-1 and in the city’s transition area, roughly between Indian River and North Landing roads, which lies under the Navy’s main flight path from Oceana to Fentress Naval Auxiliary Landing Field in Chesapeake.

The Navy wants to work with the city, said Bobby Rountree, head of Oceana’s plans and policy department.

Rountree said Oceana is seeking \$5 million to help the city buy property under the flight path to the Fentress field, hoping to tap funds from a program Congress created to halt development around military bases.

“We want to be part of the solution,” Rountree said. “We don’t want to just say, ‘City, you’ve got to do everything.’”

Navy officials said their cooperation extends to the resort. They said a statement of understanding endorsed by the Navy and the city last spring acknowledges the city’s need to redevelop the resort. The city also pledged to be sensitive to the Navy’s needs.

A year ago, the City Council put plans for the resort on hold after Capt. Tom Keeley, then Oceana's commanding officer, complained that Virginia Beach was moving ahead without Navy input.

The delay has tested the patience of resort business and property owners.

Branch, a resort hotel owner, said several major commercial and residential projects have been put on hold by the uncertainty. "We're talking about some of the most valuable real estate in the commonwealth of Virginia," he said. "The private sector is poised and ready to transform the area."

City officials wonder: Is the Navy willing to bend on its no-more-density stance at the Oceanfront? The Navy has sent mixed signals, city officials said.

In January, Navy officials presented a map to city officials that appeared to represent a compromise. It depicted noise zones at the Oceanfront, including the 19th Street corridor, where the Navy showed fewer restrictions on new development.

The "most restrictive" areas included the flight path between Oceana and the Fentress field, the accident potential zones and the areas of the city where noise levels average louder than 75 decibels.

Councilman Richard A. Maddox said the city relied on that map to make recommendations in the joint-land-use study for curbing growth around Oceana.

But in later talks, Maddox said, the Navy's tone changed. He said Navy officials toughened their stance against redevelopment at the resort – apparently contradicting the map – even objecting to a proposal for an upgraded sidewalk on 19th street.

Now, Oceana's new commanding officer, Capt. Patrick J. Lorge, recently resurrected the map,

indicating a willingness to compromise, city officials said.

"We're making progress, said Vice Mayor Louis R. Jones, who met recently with Lorge to discuss the map.

Lorge was unavailable for comment.

R.J. Nutter II, a Virginia Beach lawyer who represents several resort hotel owners, said he met with Oceana officials last month and left encouraged. "I told them that we weren't a threat to the Navy and that the Oceanfront was an ally," Nutter said.

Councilman Bob Dyer said he thinks the Navy has always been more willing to negotiate than the city recognized. But he said Virginia Beach should be willing to compromise on the number of new housing units at the resort.

Councilman Jim Reeve said he thinks the proposals coming to the City Council this month will meet the needs of the Navy, the development community and resort business owners.

"We need to move forward," Reeve said. "We need to get this city back on track."

Opinions/ Editorials

Additional Notes

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

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Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

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National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Thune upbeat after visiting two Air Force high-tech bases

Rapid City Journal

Celeste Calvito

December, 6 2005

WASHINGTON - Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said Thursday that he is even more convinced

that Ellsworth Air Force Base is suited for additional missions after examining high-tech weapons systems during a two-day tour of bases in Nevada and California.

"Every base in the country is going to be angling to land these missions, but there are factors that mitigate in our favor," Thune said in a telephone interview while flying back to South Dakota from Edwards Air Force Base in California. "We saw a lot of technologies that are emerging in the sense that they are not too far down the road, and they will be looking for basing opportunities," he said.

Thune's visits to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada on Wednesday and to Edwards on Thursday were the most recent in efforts by South Dakota's congressional delegation to insulate Ellsworth from future base-closing rounds. In August, the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, or BRAC, voted to remove Ellsworth from the Pentagon's closure list.

Among the reasons the BRAC Commissioners kept Ellsworth open is its unrestricted airspace, an attribute Thune said is important to some of the systems he saw this week.

"Unmanned aerial vehicles, whether they are bombers or reconnaissance, are in need of that," Thune said. "The FAA has issues with commercial and general aviation traffic and UAVs, and our lack of encroachment weighs very heavily in our favor," Thune said.

For instance, Beale Air Force Base in California is the home base for the Global Hawk, a high-altitude unmanned reconnaissance jet. Thune said about 50 Global Hawks are slated for production and that if the "traffic issue" comes into play at Beale, there is a possibility of splitting up the fleet.

And it could be only a few years before the military would look at sites for airborne laser, or ABL, weapons system, Thune said. Ellsworth's ability to house 747s, on which the ABL will be mounted, makes it a good prospect, he said.

Thune said the various weapons systems "are going to be queued up at different times, depending on funding and success of tests. But the more we find out about the properties of some of these platforms, the better position we are in advocating for them here. It's part of an ongoing effort that we all are involved in - Rapid City, the state, the congressional delegation," Thune said.

Q&A: Domenici talks about Cannon, Iraq, and water

Freedom Newspapers
December, 6 2005

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., was in the region on Thursday and Friday and was present for a briefing at Clovis Community College with Air Force officials. The Air Force visited the area for four days to begin the process of finding a new mission for Cannon Air Force Base.

Domenici has been in the Senate longer than any other New Mexican, and is chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

He is also a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, and the U.S. Senate Committee on Budget.

He sat down with staff from the Clovis News Journal and the Portales News-Tribune to answer questions on Friday morning.

How many sessions have you had with the new secretary of the Air Force and what is his take on Cannon?

I've had conversations with the Secretary of Defense about Cannon. One of them was to share with him the words that are in the BRAC, which say "shall seek a new mission." And he clearly understands them. I'm confident that when you tell a secretary of defense that you shall seek a mission that's very important. And I think that is what they are doing. ... As far as the Secretary of the Air Force, I have only talked to him once ... That's where we are now.

What impressions about Cannon did you get from the viewpoint of the secretary of the Air Force during your one conversation?

None of them (Air Force or Department of Defense officials) are committal, other than to say that this is a great base; they all know that. And everybody along the line is saying they are going to do their best — "We know what BRAC said, we know what your interest is (the say)." I am doing everything I can and I feel very comfortable with what I am doing.

Air Force officials have said they face challenges of antiquated equipment and a shrinking force. What do you envision as the future of the Air Force?

There is a lot of change occurring (in the Air Force). The biggest one has to do with long range and long term anti-terrorism (issues) in the broadest sense. Special op(eration)s kinds of activities are the ones being looked at in terms of the future.

Can you discuss the differences between the Base Realignment and Closure process, which targets installations for closure and realignment, and the new Cannon mission-finding process occurring now?

I am not involved with details (involving the procedures of the Air Force team recently assigned to prepare a report on Cannon's assets). Nobody would do anything (involving Cannon) until the BRAC date was up. That's 2 1/2 weeks

ago — nobody would talk to anybody until then. So, it's not three months.

Whatever they were doing, every time you would talk to (Air Force officials) they would say "No dice until that point." So, it's not like we've been having a bunch of exchanges. There was nothing to exchange. On the other hand, that does not mean they weren't doing things. I have every reason to believe they were. That they were looking very carefully at some things.

Did Arizona Sen. John McCain, in efforts to protect his interests, have anything to do with Cannon being put on the BRAC list as has been rumored?

All I know is that the secretary of defense is ... in my opinion, and has always been for me, a very honest, forthright man. On more than one occasion, he has told me there is no politics involved (in BRAC). ... But who knows. Humans are humans, and there may have been within that process rubbing of shoulders, comments, whispering. I don't know about any of that.

When do you think Cannon could have a new mission?

We heard months. I don't think that means a year. ... I think it will be less than (a year). I think they want to (find a mission expeditiously). I think our chances (of finding a mission) are not enhanced by delay. But, you know ... I am trying my best to tell you, I am not a military planner, I am not a military expert. ... It seems to me things will be more stabilized in a year.

What if the people of Clovis and Portales don't want a mission the Air Force team recommends for Cannon?

I don't think the military is going to shove anything down our throats. This is ... going to have to be a very joint partnership, as it's always been.

Will the process of finding a new mission be more open than the BRAC process was? BRAC is kind of non-transparent by definition. Clearly, this (mission-finding process) is going to be eons more transparent (than BRAC). ... Before decisions are made (about Cannon), there

will be plenty known, plenty of the results and evaluation results will be forthcoming. That does not mean anybody's going to sit in a room and ... invite Pete Domenici or Gen. (military base planner Hanson) Scott into a decision on their meetings. But neither are they going to bring a big surprise tomorrow and say "Hey, we are doing this." We will be a part of that.

Two BRAC commissioners recessed from voting on Cannon for personal reasons. The number of votes needed to remove a base from the list, however, remained the same — five. How do you feel about that and is there anything that can be done about it?

We (the congressional delegates) looked into (the recusal issue) ourselves. The conclusion we came up with is that you couldn't do anything about it. That's not challengeable. The commission itself was unhappy, too. They looked into it, but everybody's final decision was that they make their rules, and that's it.

Brig. Gen. Ron Ladnier, leader of the Air Force team that visited the region last week, volunteered a personal opinion about the future of Cannon at the Clovis Community College briefing, saying there would be a new mission for the base. How optimistic should supporters be?

I don't know what (his statement) means. ... They (the Air Force team) kept telling us (the congressional delegates) they're a fact-finding group. They're going to produce a product not a policy. So, what does the opinion of a fact-finder have to do with a policy? I just kind of think it (his opinion) doesn't have a big impact, but nonetheless it could have an impact on what they produce. ... If they have to write a conclusion about a facility, they can't be saying we recommend this, but they could be saying how they feel.

Can you explain the evolution of the fact-finding Air Force team?

I have no way of knowing.

Is anybody else going to come to the region for Cannon evaluation purposes?

I am not aware of a team like this (planning a visit). But I wouldn't be at all surprised if from time to time people come in here. I don't think they will be coming in that manner, with a big hearing and participation. But there's got to be some specifics that are going to be addressed by people within the defense department.

What are your predictions for the future of the Ute Water Project?

I think you know that the authorization for that goes to our committee (Committee on Energy and Natural Resources) and I have already agreed that I will introduce the bill; I will be the sponsor, which means it will get through the Senate. Then we will work with the House and it should happen.

But here's the problem: There is no source of money, there is no pot, and there is no water resource revolving fund. ... And so, you know, the price (of the project) has been going up, and it's big. I have never been able to honestly tell the delegation that comes and visits that I know where to get the money. What I have said is that I will do everything I can, and I will. You know that there will have to be a match (of funds for the project). We all (federal, state, and local authorities) have to come up with some money. And the base (of money contributors) for the Ute (Water Project) has been shrinking because people have been dropping off. ...

I think it's best for me to be absolutely forthright. We can put this on the books of the United States government as something that we have authorized to be done. But, I don't think we are going to quickly be able to say we have appropriated money. We might even have to take steps because most (water projects like this) are done in pieces. It takes a nice chunk of money for planning and designing.

Does eastern New Mexico have any other water options for the future?

I am asking the local people and the experts and they don't know of any other options. So, we just have to work on this and we have to put all our strength to it and see what we can move. ... I will do that. It's just that I know which pot of money, which appropriation bill, it comes out of. ... It does come within the jurisdiction of the committee on energy and water, which I

appropriate every year. ... I don't want to leave it on this depressing (note). I've got to try to find a way, but I don't see it right now. Let's get it in there (Congress, as an authorized project) and get it passed, as a first step. I've made that commitment and that can be done.

Where do you stand on immigration issues?

...The big problem of the pressure of people that can't make a living, and are moving with their feet, is still there. (President Bush) proposed some things and got burned and got off the issues. How did he get burned? He got burned because whenever he talks about worker permits many of his strong supporters think he is ignoring making the border safe. ... We (the American government) took the lead within the last year and a half, and put in huge amounts of money that (Bush) didn't have, which he talked about in his speech — 2,000 new beds, 1,500 new agents, new robotics all aimed at trying to make (the border) less porous.

The president knows that you can't just button up the border. You have to have a policy with reference to the rest of (the immigration issue). There are 9 to 11 million illegal Mexicans, Guatemalans, and Central Americans (in the U.S.) Anybody who runs around and says we are going to throw them all out is just dreaming. They are everywhere. They are not just in Clovis and Albuquerque. They are in Ohio. And they are not just on the farms. ... They're automobile mechanics, and then you have people in Maryland saying they are building all the houses. ...

So the president was always trying to put that into the mix, and now he finally in this speech said "OK, we've got to (find a work program and tighten border security)," but right now we've got to emphasize putting in the resources to try to control the border. I myself don't think (Bush) nor have we done enough about that."

Should immigrants be granted citizenship status? I am not bashful to tell you some of the things I want to do people are not going to like. But I think I am going to be a realist because I don't think we ought to tell the American people we are going to round these people (immigrants) up and send them home. We ought to button the border up and set a new immigration policy and

we ought to decide what do we give (immigrants) short of citizenship. We shouldn't give them citizenship (just because they are here). You've got to do something realistic, and at some point send them home. But, when you send them home, I am not saying after three years, maybe two or five years, they've got to be put in line some way to start the process through of becoming a citizen, but they aren't going to push everybody (else applying for citizenship) out of the way.

America was founded upon its open borders. How do immigrants fit into the American way of life?

Sovereignty is important. ... America is sovereign and you cannot just open (America) up with the disparity in economics because the world would come here. ... So, we have to have (immigration policies) organized. But people who think that America does not need immigrants during this century and as far as we can see — and I mean need in the sense of not menial jobs, such as farming — but we will need workers because our growth patterns and demographics indicate either we are going to need a lot of workers or we will be a dormant, dead economy. ... It's sort of a circle, you got to have both, you've got to have growth, you've got to have them, and if you have them you can have growth. But how you do that in an atmosphere like we've got, that's as tough as an issue as you can get. ... The people have now put these issues high enough where we can't ignore it any longer.

Who will be in the race for president in 2008? I think everybody knows on the Democratic side that it is being said that Hillary Clinton is the front-runner. I understand from our governor (Bill Richardson) that he is going to run even though I think he is sort of saying maybe. I think what that means is he is going to feel his way. There will be a number of Democrats. But I think in the end Hillary Clinton will be the front-runner.

On our (Republican) side, it's a very interesting one because the front-runners are not conservative on the issues of pro-life, same-sex marriage. But probably the two front-runners are McCain and (former New York Mayor Rudolph

Giuliani. At this particular time, probably Giuliani, even though he hasn't been in the limelight, is ahead. ... So I think it is very open on the Republican side.

There are a couple of governor sleepers on both sides. So, let's go to the Democrats, first. The governor of the state of Virginia... is gaining a lot of momentum... The governor of Arkansas is another Republican sleeper.

What do you think of the latest Supreme Court nominee?

All this late evaluation and news and promotion about his early positions when he was writing letters and saying what the strategy might be on abortion,... (That) will make life tough for him, but I don't think any of them so far are going to be deadly. In my opinion, there will not be a filibuster. I would be surprised if he didn't get more than 55 votes, maybe even 60. And that's because the American people respect qualified people that are put up for these kinds of positions. ... I think he's a terrific man from what I can tell.

What does the future hold for Pete Domenici? If I feel like I have been strong and enjoyed my work, then there is no reason I shouldn't run (for Senate) again. But I am not committed either way. I do feel I must finish up my work on nuclear power — there needs to be a strong American policy on how to get rid of (nuclear) waste.

Do you support the Iraq War and do you have a vision on how to end it?

First of all, I would speak to the issue of political antagonism (generated by) the opposition party (Democrats). Predominately the Democratic Party is fighting the president, and in particular is carping on whether he told the truth or not (about weapons of mass destruction and reasons that brought us into the war). ... The American people have caught onto that. They don't think that is constructive, they understand that it is political maneuvering. ...

However, I am rather pleased with what's happened in the last month. The Democrats ... have had to try to articulate their position on the war. And in all actuality, they come closer to the president rather than further (in their views and

vision for the war's end): They think we need to train the Iraqi police force, they think Iraqi elections are important.

My take (on the war) is that it is as tough a job as we've ever had. I don't know that the word victory is right, but there is a good chance that we will succeed. ... I believe we will start withdrawing (our troops), in an order of the way, within the next year. A significant withdrawal will be possible then because the Iraqi army will get better. ... In a nutshell, we can succeed. We can't just act as if this is not important to the future of America and the Middle East. Terrorism will be made stronger if America fails.

Air Force intelligence center finds new home

Daily press

Jim Hodges

December, 6 2005

HAMPTON -- It was a matter of accommodating the soon-to-be-homeless, which is why movers were at Air Force Command and Control and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center at Langley Air Force Base in the early Monday morning rain.

Their trip wasn't far, just off base to the Hampton Roads Center North Campus on Magruder Boulevard, where a temporary headquarters awaited 158 members of the 780-person operation in a building with the National Institute of Aerospace.

By Oct. 1, 2006, more-complete digs will be ready and everyone with the "C2 Center" will move into 66,080 square feet of a 100,000-square-foot facility, being built next door.

"It's a perfect fit," said Charlie Sapp, a Hampton city councilman and retired Navy captain who calls himself the "matchmaker" of the move to

the center, which is being developed by Craig Davis Properties.

The move was necessitated when Air Combat Command, Langley's primary tenant, wanted to renovate space occupied by the C2 Center, which is housed in four separate buildings on the base and one near Coliseum Mall. A push to build a new facility for the C2 Center on base went as far as doing an environmental impact survey on a Langley site, but funding was not yet available, said Lt. Col. Christopher Walker, director of the C2 Center's staff.

Word went out that the Air Force was looking for a home for the C2 Center, a futuristic operation heavily into experimenting in its mission of coordinating and developing the future of the Air Force.

Sapp was listening. He is a proponent of computer modeling and simulation, and the C2 Center and the National Institute of Aerospace are users. He aspires for Hampton to take its place alongside Suffolk in housing what is becoming a growth industry. Since the federal Base Realignment and Closure commission's recommendation to close Fort Monroe, "we've been looking at some creative ways to work with our local military to help determine their future," Sapp said.

"I heard second- or third-hand that the Air Force was looking for an off-base facility," he said. "I knew it had something to do with modeling and simulation, so I was intrigued. They had already put out a request for a proposal, and nothing fit."

A "request for proposal" lists the requirements for those who bid for business.

"I didn't know (Maj.) Gen. Tommy Crawford," the C2 Center's commander, "and we had to find his itch and scratch it," Sapp said.

That "itch" involved the size of the facility, staying close to Langley Air Force Base and meeting criteria for the Department of Defense's anti-terrorism standards.

The "scratch" became an \$18-million, high-tech building.

"This is a great opportunity for us to move into a brand-new facility but still remain in close proximity to the base," Crawford said in a statement.

Though Sapp sees the C2 Center as one of the building blocks of a Hampton modeling and simulation center, there remains a question as to its permanence.

Its lease is for five years, and Walker said its long-term future would be moving back onto Langley Air Force Base.

Opinions/ Editorials

Examiner Editorial - Homesteading at Walter Reed?

The Examiner
December, 6 2005

District of Columbia officials are considering new uses for 113 acres of federal land long occupied by Walter Reed Army Medical Center after the historic northwest medical facility moves to Bethesda in 2011, as required by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Mayor Anthony Williams says the city plans to create a redevelopment authority to come up with plans for the parcel. That's a bit presumptuous, since it's still not clear whether the District will get the land - or the 149 other acres elsewhere in the city that the federal government no longer needs.

Some in Congress want to sell excess federal land to pay for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, including Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Calif., who has even suggested putting Theodore Roosevelt Island on the auction block.

If saner forces prevail, D.C. could have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to provide poor residents with perhaps their only chance of owning a

home, which is a time-honored way of building wealth that can be handed down to future generations as well as stable communities. Protecting one's own property value is a powerful incentive for taking care of the surrounding area.

Homesteading wouldn't cost the city or the feds a dime, but would greatly help impoverished District families hurt by the government's misguided attempts to help them in the past. Charitable groups such as Habitat for Humanity could be enlisted to help 21st-century homesteaders put up homes on land they purchase for a nominal fee after promising to live on it for at least five years. The equity they create could later be tapped to fund college educations and secure retirements.

Walter Reed has been patching up soldiers for generations. It would be fitting to use those healing grounds to salve another kind of pain.

Additional Notes

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

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December 7, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Electric Boat to eliminate up to 2,400 jobs

Business Today

By Associated Press

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

NEW HAVEN, Conn. - Submarine builder Electric Boat said Tuesday it would eliminate up to 2,400 jobs, or 20 percent of its work force, by the end of next year, citing the declining size of the nation's submarine fleet and the Navy's decision to steer repair work to its own shipyards that survived the base closure process.

Company spokesman Bob Hamilton said between 1,900 and 2,400 jobs would be eliminated. He said no decision has been made on the number of layoffs. Most jobs

will be cut in Connecticut, but between 500 and 600 will be eliminated from its Rhode Island facility.

Electric Boat, a division of General Dynamics Corp., employs 11,800 people. It has contracts to build nine submarines by 2014.

Submarine advocates have been pressing the Navy to boost submarine production from about one to two ships a year. Current projections show the nation's submarine fleet dwindling from the mid 50s to as low as the 30s.

"If it goes up to two a year, we'll ramp back up and hire the people we need to do that," Hamilton said.

The company survived a scare when the Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted this summer not to close the nearby submarine base in Groton. The submarine base and private shipyard work together on many projects.

Hamilton said the company recently received a letter saying the Navy would direct future submarine repair work to its own operated shipyards. The closest is in Kittery, Maine.

The Pentagon tried unsuccessfully to close the Maine shipyard, leaving the Navy

with more shipbuilding and repair capacity than it expected. The Navy's decision means Electric Boat, which frequently repairs and upgrades the ships it builds, will not be able to bid on that work.

"It's important for us all to bear in mind that these reductions are the result of pressure on the Navy's shipbuilding budget," Electric Boat President John Casey said in a memo to company employees. "Everyone affected by the layoffs deserves to be treated with dignity and respect through their last day at Electric Boat." General Dynamic's shares rose 25 cents to \$113.25 in midday trading on the New York Stock Exchange, where they have traded in a 52-week range of \$97.59 to \$122.27.

Retraining effort put in motion

Norwich Bulletin

By Ray Hackett

December 7, 2005

GROTON-- John Beauregard wasted no time Tuesday setting the wheels in motion to assist Electric Boat employees who may lose their jobs next year.

"I've already talked with the company and union representatives about setting up a meeting," said Beauregard, executive director of the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board. He attended Tuesday's legislative breakfast when the job cuts were announced.

He also plans to contact the region's six chambers of commerce, asking them to notify their members of the potential layoffs, and identifying those employers who might need workers with specific skills. It's part of the "network" the board has created in conjunction with the state Department of Labor and other agencies to assist in the

retraining and re-employment of dislocated workers.

"And we'll be looking for a federal grant to assist in that retraining effort," he said.

Task force in works

Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced Tuesday she was forming a task force to work with the company and is seeking a meeting with Navy Secretary Gordon England to discuss the Navy's decision to eliminate EB from all future repair and maintenance work.

"Let me say first that we fought the sub base closure -- and we will fight these job cuts as well. We won on the sub base and I intend to win on this one," Rell said during a visit to Norwich later Tuesday. "These job cuts are not just numbers in a press release -- they are valuable workers -- workers who have families counting on them and families who do not welcome this news at any time, let alone at the holidays."

Rell said her task force will meet with EB officials to determine strategies for short- and longer-term job protection and job growth.

"Like the entire area of Southeastern Connecticut, EB needs to diversify," she said Tuesday. "And we need to help them. We need to tailor a specific program, working hand in hand with EB management, to plan and prepare the way for EB's future."

Earlier this week, Rell announced the appointment of the diversification commission's nine-member executive committee, which is scheduled to meet Thursday.

John Markowicz, a member of that executive committee and executive director of the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise

Region, said the Subbase Realignment Coalition, a sub group of seCTer, would meet Monday to discuss the planned layoffs. SeCTer is the regional economic development organization in southeastern Connecticut.

"Anytime there's a major announcement of the loss of skilled, well-paying manufacturing jobs, that's definitely not good news," said Markowicz, who also attended Tuesday's breakfast meeting at EB.

Rell also announced this week that the state Bonding Commission will approve a \$357,000 state grant to sector Friday at its commission meeting. The money is the state's share of the cost of the Connecticut Procurement Technical Assistance Program that assists defense-related businesses in southeastern Connecticut in marketing and technical assistance.

Beach unveils Oceana plan Oceana Naval Air Station

The Virginian-Pilot.

By: Marisa Taylor and Jon W. Glass

December 7, 2005



Oceana Naval Air Station.

VIRGINIA BEACH — Ending months of uncertainty, the city on Tuesday detailed a series of proposals to save the fighter jets at Oceana Naval Air Station, including a pledge not to condemn or buy existing homes around the base.

Many elements of the plan, such as proposed restrictions on new homes and businesses in high-risk areas off the base's runways and

under a key flight path, already had been previewed in public.

The only new piece was a proposal to use condemnation as a last resort to acquire vacant land zoned to permit houses in Accident Potential Zone 1, the area off the base where the risk of a jet crash is greatest.

City officials said they may have to buy about 37 acres in APZ-1. The land likely would be rendered undevelopable if the city enacts a proposed ban on new homes in APZ-1, and that would require the city to compensate the property owners, they said.

Condemnation could be used to resolve disputes over the purchase price or title claims, city officials said.

The General Assembly would have to pass legislation letting the city condemn the property. Currently, the city can use eminent domain for public uses, such as schools and roads, but not for a Navy jet base, city officials said.

Existing homes and businesses in APZ-1 would not be affected by the proposed changes.

The City Council is scheduled to vote Dec. 20 on the package.

The plan, presented by city staff, is intended to satisfy demands imposed on Virginia Beach by the federal Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The commission had told the city to roll back and halt development around Oceana or risk losing the jets.

City Manager James K. Spore said the proposed package tries to "strike a balance"

between preserving Oceana's mission while allowing the city to meet its needs.

Spore said the plan contains three central ideas: Oceana should remain in Virginia Beach as the Navy's East Coast master jet base, no one's home or business should be condemned, and the city should "carefully and appropriately" control future development around the base.

Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf said the plan was "hard-fought and hard-won."

"Most citizens in this city embrace having the master jet base in Virginia Beach," she said, "but they didn't want to see their neighbors displaced."

Councilman Bob Dyer said he supported the narrow use of eminent domain to comply with BRAC.

"This is almost painless, compared with what could have been, especially given the onerous BRAC conditions we were given," he said. "We stop encroachment, which is what the Navy really wanted all along, and it really adversely impacts almost no one."

The city does not plan to compensate owners of single-family homes on lots that can be redeveloped into duplexes. The new rules would forbid that development. Some owners called that loss of property rights without compensation unfair.

But some people who attended the briefing said the city had reached a good compromise overall.

"Big picture, they're moving in absolutely the only direction they can move," said

R. Edward Bourdon Jr., a lawyer who represents developers. "This is doable. The

issues that are on the table now are issues that are small in their impact and scope and can be addressed."

A key concern is whether the plan will be accepted by the Defense Department's inspector general, who must certify whether Virginia Beach has complied with BRAC's demands.

The most controversial BRAC condition required Virginia Beach and the state to create a program to condemn and buy homes and businesses in APZ-1.

Some City Council members acknowledged that the strategy presented Tuesday may not pass muster with the inspector general, but they hope the plan will address the Navy's concerns about encroachment.

"I don't want the Navy to stay so badly that I'm willing to do anything at any cost," Councilwoman Reba McClanan said. "What I do want to do is work with the Navy so they can maintain their presence."

The city and the Navy are trying to resolve differences over the city's plans to transform the resort into a bustling, year-round residential community.

Planning Director Robert J. Scott revealed plans that would raise the maximum allowable density for some new residential projects to 60 units per acre from 36.

Overall, however, Scott said he anticipated only a "modest increase" in residential density at the resort. He said the Navy had been briefed on the plans and there were "no surprises."

Most of the resort is within noise zones in which the Navy deems homes as incompatible.

The city is proposing to change zoning rules at the resort to encourage a mix of homes, restaurants and shops. Officials hope those changes will result in no more than 5,000 new homes, down from about 9,000 that planners say could be built under current zoning rules.

Elsewhere, property owners in the western half of the city's transition area – roughly between North Landing and Indian River roads – would face some of the toughest development restrictions.

In the medium-noise zone that covers much of the area, owners could build only one home per 5 acres, down from the current maximum density of one home per acre.

The city proposes to buy about 1,200 acres of vacant land in the transition area to prevent development, using a mix of state and federal grants.

The city Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 6 p.m. today on the proposed changes to the resort and APZ-1.

Council says no one will lose homes around NAS Oceana

Virginia Beach News
December 6, 2005

It's time to relax for 3,400 people who live in the accident potential zone around NAS Oceana.

The 11-member Virginia Beach City Council is rejecting the idea that those residents must lose their homes – either by condemnation or outright buys.

That was one of the big demands of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, when it issued its report in August.

Now, some people members suggest returning to the commitments in the city's Joint Land Use Study, which has a pledge to control future residential encroachment around the master jet base.

Louis Jones said, "Virginia Beach does want to work with the Navy and does want to come to some type of an agreement that will be workable for both the city and the military."

Bob Dyer added, "The bottom line is if we can stop encroachment, that's basically what the Navy wanted. I think if we can create a conducive environment where the Navy wants to stay, we can have a long and prosperous relationship for decades to come."

Rosemary Wilson agreed Va. Beach needs to honor its past commitments.

"Well, it would say 'you can't trust us, you know, we're not good for our word, we're not sincere,'" she noted.

Councilman Ron Villanueva added, "Oceana is a vital part of our community and we have to figure out a way to partner with those guys and also find a way to have smarter growth with regards to the oceanfront and our other key strategic growth areas."

Virginia Beach Citizen BRAC Committee Chairman Phil Shucet thinks some way can be found to save Oceana, the homes, and allow for growth.

"I'm a real optimistic person. I think there's always a lot of magic out there. You have to

look for it and sometimes that's hard. This is one of those hard times to find that right answer, to be accomodating, if we can, to our city's largest employer in a way that makes sense," Shucet stressed.

City council and the Citizen BRAC Committee are meeting Tuesday night.

The public can comment on the plan at the next council meeting, Dec. 13. Council will vote on the plan on Dec. 20.

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

N/A

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

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Department of Defense Releases

National News Articles

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Politicians Weigh Their Options to Stop EB Layoffs

Process would be different from fight to save sub base

Thune optimistic about Ellsworth's future

Eielson upgrades housing despite losing personnel

Davis and Moran Introduce Legislation To Make Fort Belvoir Roads Eligible for Military Construction

Additional Notes

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Politicians Weigh Their Options to Stop EB Layoffs

Process would be different from fight to save sub base

By Ted Mann

The Day

12/8/2005

The political effort to reverse planned layoffs at Groton-based submarine builder Electric Boat will require different arguments from the ones that saved the Naval Submarine Base just up the river, veterans of that effort said Wednesday.

Efforts by the state's congressional delegation and defense community to shore up job levels at EB, which announced this week that it would cut roughly 20 percent of its work force over the next year, "would not be of the same form and substance" as those to repeal the Navy's recommendation to close the base, said one of the leaders of that fight, John C. Markowicz, who served as chairman of the Subbase Realignment Coalition.

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By Congressional Desk
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Davis and Moran have been working with military and local officials to reduce congestion in the Fort Belvoir area for more than four years. Specifically, both lawmakers have spearheaded the effort to replace Woodlawn Road, the main north-south route through the base, which was closed due to its proximity to a secure communications installation on the post. This has disrupted traffic patterns in southeastern Fairfax County.

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“Fort Belvoir continues to grow in importance as a military installation, and as it does, the region is going to need more help from the federal government in responding to the increased activity at the base,” Davis said. “This is a common sense, appropriate, and responsible response to the results of the BRAC process.”

“With this legislation, we are working to ensure that there is an even stronger federal role in improving traffic in and around Fort Belvoir,” said Moran. “With an estimated 20,000 new employees set to move to the area in the near future, expediting the Woodlawn replacement extension and improving other access roads could not be more vital to the region’s continued economic viability.”

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

N/A

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 8, 2005

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By Ted Mann

The Day

12/8/2005

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Opinions/ Editorials

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Additional Notes

N/A

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 12, 2005

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N/A

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N/A

Local News Articles

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With Harvard Help, Arsenal Site Thrives

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December 11, 2005

Portsmouth News

What are we to make of the recent news that the Pentagon is shifting repair work away from private contractors and giving more to public facilities such as Portsmouth Naval Shipyard?

Following the passion and anxiety surrounding the base-closure process earlier this year, we are glad the Navy Department is finally getting it right by rewarding PNS with the work it deserves for being the Navy's most efficient and cost-conscious shipyards. It always seemed illogical to us that the Navy could give PNS one award after another for its ability to accomplish its contracts on time and under budget, and then recommend it for elimination when it put the shipyard on the base closure list last May. As much as economic self-preservation, what brought the greater Seacoast region together when PNS was put on the base-closure list was a combination of pride and anger. There was pride in the reality that PNS was one of the top shipyards in the country and its workers were among the best anywhere, and anger that the Navy had downgraded the base's importance and unique capabilities to justify its elimination in a fit of budget-cutting rationale.

In the case of PNS, the public spoke loudly against the Pentagon's eagerness to treat PNS as an easily-replaced asset. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission upheld the powerful case made for keeping Portsmouth in business when it removed the shipyard from the closure list this past August.

"It should be the gold standard by which we should measure other shipyards. Their ability to turn around subs quicker than any other shipyard, thereby saving the Navy (money) was significantly noted," said Anthony J. Principi, BRAC chairman. The BRAC vote was a resounding rejection of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's drive to privatize military functions despite dubious financial claims and questionable military-preparedness arguments.

Following the BRAC process, the Navy was left with more shipbuilding and repair capacity than it had planned. Amid a new round of budget cutting, the Pentagon recently told Electric Boat, the Groton, Conn.-based submarine builder, that the Navy would direct future submarine repair work to publicly-owned shipyards.

While there is much joy in the PNS community this holiday season, the same cannot be said for those who work for Electric Boat. The company announced Tuesday that it would lay off as many as 2,400 workers in Connecticut and Rhode Island by the end of 2006. "These reductions are the result of pressure on the Navy's shipbuilding budget," said John Casey, Electric Boat president.

"It's been policy that public shipyards are level-loaded first, then the work goes to the private yards," said a Navy Sea Systems spokesman. The irony is that many civilian planners in the Pentagon wanted to eliminate one of its premier public shipyards. That some of the laid-off Electric Boat workers - who might have been trained by PNS employees assigned to private shipyards

because of their expertise - might end up working at the shipyard is yet another affirmation of the value of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

For more than two centuries, the yard has survived numerous closure attempts and has responded by becoming increasingly resilient. In an age of constant budget pressure and changing missions, the workers at the shipyard will have another opportunity to show their expertise and dedication.

It may also have to expand its mission to make itself relevant in time for the next base-closure round when, rest assured, we will hear again about a PNS that doesn't fit into the Navy's future needs.

Our View: A forum about BRAC effects reveals that we need facts, coordination.

December 11, 2005

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)

Forget about sending "Homes For Sale" brochures to military families in Atlanta. Hospitals short of nurses and schools needing teachers can cancel plans to recruit spouses of FORSCOM officers coming to Fort Bragg due to decisions of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Or at least, forget those plans for now. The timeline for personnel to be transferred to Fort Bragg will be closer to 2010 than to 2006, as business owners, professionals and government officials learned Thursday at a community forum.

But if it's too early to expect new jobs and an influx of 20,000 people (spouses and families included), it's urgent that we begin other preparations for the effects on Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base.

The forum, hosted by the Cumberland County Business Council, helped set some priorities. Some efforts should begin now. Infrastructure

Transportation issues that will need attention aren't limited to traffic or even to improved public transportation service. The U.S. Army Forces Command Headquarters, which will be at Fort Bragg, equips the Army. FORSCOM could require more roads for its tasks. And defense contractors could require more of the city's airport than it's currently able to deliver.

The population surge and housing growth will increase demands for water and sewer. Such projects take years to plan, and if expansions are in prospect, the paperwork must begin now.

School administrators want the demographics of families likely to move to Fort Bragg. The school systems affected will need to estimate how many children will need classrooms and teachers by 2010 — and if special-needs children are to be among them.

County administrators also want to know if the Department of Defense will build more schools on Fort Bragg, as suggested in a recent federal study. That will affect their planning.

College administrators asked about the types of civilian jobs likely to come into the region. They want to know if they can train workers or offer courses that will be necessary for defense-related careers. Next year's freshman class will graduate in 2010 — the year BRAC-related jobs could arrive in this community. The courses and training need to be offered soon.

Expectations

A four-star command at Fort Bragg will offer economic opportunities. But growth also arrives with costs. The benefits will be long-term, but not necessarily immediate. Expectations must be realistic. BRAC does not stand for "Bringing Riches and Cash." Civilian jobs could arrive gradually, and with employees already filling them. The housing segment of the economy will benefit from growth alone, as will retail

sales. Counties want to be able to diversify their local economies with new defense-contract jobs. But not all of them will arrive automatically. Counties must recruit these business and contractors.

The other side

Patrick Hurley, director of the county's Workforce Development Center, reminded those attending one workshop that 2,332 jobs will be lost at Pope. Add the workers' families, and an estimated 6,000 people stand to be affected.

As new arrivals from Atlanta are welcomed, people here whose jobs will be lost need to know that they won't be forgotten.

The center received a federal grant to help employees find jobs, or otherwise work through the transition if they lose careers due to BRAC decisions.

The details about what, specifically, Cumberland and other counties can do immediately to prepare for BRAC's changes weren't the larger parts of the forum. The timelines for changes aren't firm, since some will hinge on construction schedules at Fort Bragg. The forum's chief benefit was to give participants a "where do we start" crash course in how to set priorities and which questions to ask first.

Coordination

The theme that emerged from the morning's exercise in planning is that it will be crucial to work together. The Business Council wants to take on the role as liaison. That was no surprise, since the council stepped up to begin the research and to make contacts with defense and other officials. Having the council in that role makes sense.

Petty politics and self-promotion of one interest group over another will hinder economic development that could result from Fort Bragg's growth. It can be frustrating in Atlanta — and at Bragg — to be overwhelmed with different groups and various local government officials calling,

visiting, asking questions and otherwise clamoring for time and attention.

A measure of regional planning will be necessary. Moore, Hoke and Harnett counties also will be affected by growth at Fort Bragg. Efforts of all the counties should be coordinated, and that can be done through the Business Council, which represents both Fayetteville and Cumberland County. During the forum it became clear that each area of focus — from marketing to business recruitment — will eventually touch upon the other.

Cumberland County and its neighbors have one chance to react wisely to the changes at Fort Bragg, and must do so relatively fast. The first decisions to make are to do it right and to do it together.

Misinterpreting Kelo

Washington Times

December 12, 2005

By James A. Davids

"The takeover of one person's property to give it to another person for [economic purposes] is just plain wrong. Economic development should never be considered a public use." (Rep. Thelma Drake, Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, July 1, 2005, p. B11.)

Mrs. Drake penned these words when commenting on the case of *Kelo v. New London*, in which the Supreme Court upheld a Connecticut town's power to condemn private property for economic development. Mrs. Drake forcefully drew the line between a city's proper use of condemnation power (for a school, road, or other "public use"), and a city's improper use of this power (for economic development or another "public purpose," which the Supreme Court has now permitted).

Mrs. Drake claimed to oppose developers who wanted cities to condemn private property for economic development, and

warned that "no homeowner is safe from local government seeking to boost revenues in city coffers." It is, therefore, more than a little ironic that the biggest land developer in our nation -- the federal government -- is forcing our local government to condemn private property for solely economic purposes.

Readers of our local newspapers have no doubt as to the motivation of Virginia Beach's city council in considering a request for authority to condemn local private property. The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission has demanded that Virginia Beach condemn and buy all incompatible buildings in the riskiest accident-potential zones around Oceana. Failure to comply with these demands could result in the Navy moving its jet squadrons to another base. To prevent this departure, the council on December 20 will vote on a plan which would use condemnation as a last resort to buy land zoned for residential use in the accident? potential zone.

The justification for this condemnation authority is solely economic. Virginia Beach will not use the condemned land for schools or roads ("public use"). Rather, this land will simply lie fallow, and will only be used to slow down a crashing pilot. The real reason for the condemnation authority is to keep Virginia Beach's largest employer from relocating.

One could argue that the condemned land would be put to a public use, this being national defense. One could argue that the Navy needs skilled pilots and these skills can only be retained or enhanced by training, which requires flying, which may lead to crashes. I agree, which leads to my proposed solution.

Although Virginia Beach would condemn the property for a public purpose (continued revenues, something denounced by Mrs. Drake), the federal government would condemn the property for a public use

(training of its Navy fighters). Since national defense is a legitimate reason to condemn property, the federal government, and not Virginia Beach, should condemn the property it deems necessary for national defense. Although this will shift the financial burden from Virginia Beach to Washington, where it belongs, I can assure you that the federal government spends money on far less essential matters. Besides, a projected \$268 million is "pocket change" for a government that has increased federal spending by 30 percent in the last four years.

Developers' interest in Fort Monroe is high

Hampton flooded with ideas about base

Richmond Times Dispatch

By Andrew Petkofsky

December 12, 2005

Fort Monroe facts

Name: For James Monroe, U.S. president 1817-1825.

Size: Largest stone fort in the United States. Walls of old fort enclose 63 acres.

Shape: Walls form polygon with seven fronts joined by seven diamond-shaped bastions.

Moat: About 150 feet across at widest, and tidal because it connects to Mill Creek. Deepest point is about 8 feet at high tide.

Location: Southeastern tip of Hampton on site where early English colonists built Fort Algernourne in 1609. Original mission was to protect entrance to Hampton Roads and several port cities. One of a series of coastal-

defense fortifications constructed after the War of 1812, in which Great Britain captured and burned Washington.

Construction: Begun 1819, finished 1834. Old fort made of granite, with some sandstone facings. Stone came first from quarries along the York River, then from quarries along the Potomac River.

Design: By Gen. Simon Bernard, French engineer officer who came to the United States after the defeat of Napoleon. Walls that face open water contain rooms, called casemates, that were normally used to hold artillery.

History: So formidable that it never fell to Confederate forces during the Civil War; Abraham Lincoln visited in 1862 and 1865. At various points in their military careers, both Robert E. Lee and Edgar Allan Poe were stationed there. Site of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's famous "contraband" decision that escaping slaves reaching Union lines would not be returned to bondage. In addition, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned at the fort after the Civil War. By World War II, armaments at Monroe made Hampton Roads among the most heavily defended places in the U.S., but its artillery batteries were later made obsolete by development of the long-range bomber and the aircraft carrier. Since World War II, Monroe has housed headquarters responsible for training soldiers, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

Source: Dennis P. Mroczkowski, director of Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum

As the U.S. Army prepares to move out of Fort Monroe in Hampton, developers are jockeying to move in.

Mayor Ross Kearney says companies already have barraged city officials with ideas for redeveloping the historic, 500-acre fort that has been marked for closure by federal officials.

"We've gone beyond nibbles," Kearney said. "We've had shark attacks."

But Hampton, which hopes to play a central role in shaping the future of a scenic, waterfront property that has been a military installation since before the Civil War, isn't ready to court any specific commercial proposals.

Instead, city officials are working to involve regular citizens as well as business representatives in a process they hope will enable Fort Monroe to evolve as quickly as possible from a military outpost to a pleasing civilian landscape.

That landscape, as Kearney describes it, would offer parks, neighborhoods and a commercial presence that leans more toward corporate headquarters than convenience stores or shopping districts.

The federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted unanimously in August to recommend closing Fort Monroe, and that recommendation became law last month.

Although the Army has not formally given city officials a timetable for closing Fort Monroe, Col. Jason T. Evans, the garrison commander, told employees at a meeting on Nov. 15 that some of the fort's military functions will move elsewhere beginning in 2009 and that all post facilities will shut down no later than 2011.

Fort Monroe's major military tenant, the headquarters of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, will move in 2011 to

Fort Eustis in nearby Newport News, Evans said. He told employees that roughly two-thirds of the fort's jobs will remain in the Tidewater area after closure.

Although the meeting was closed to the public, Fort Monroe officials provided a written "message" that Evans delivered at the meeting as well as two pages of questions and the answers he gave in response.

Closing the fort means that Hampton will lose about 1,400 military and about 2,000 civilian jobs, along with more than \$300 million a year in economic activity, according to city officials.

Kearney said economic impact is a key reason the city has been working to position itself to direct the redevelopment.

The transition processes is a complicated one in which the military must clean up environmental hazards such as unexploded artillery shells and complete a transfer that is expected at least initially to place much of the land under state ownership.

Hampton has established a "federal area development authority" that can legally serve as a governmental redevelopment authority for the fort property.

And the city has begun polling residents for ideas. About 130 attended a public meeting in October, Kearney said, and more than 2,000 have visited a city Web site about the Fort Monroe transition. Of those "hits," 160 people have offered redevelopment ideas via online suggestion forms, the mayor said.

Citizens have overwhelmingly said they want to preserve recreation facilities at the fort, including existing parks and beaches. They've also said they want to preserve and

keep accessible the fort's many historic landmarks and prevent the fort from becoming an exclusive or gated community, Kearney said.

The property's central historic feature is the nation's only stone fort surrounded by a moat. There are also more than 150 historic homes -- valued at \$1.3 million to \$3.6 million each, according to Kearney -- that must be protected and maintained under historic-preservation laws.

Because the cost of maintaining the historically significant structures is estimated by city officials at \$14 million a year, officials are looking for redevelopment schemes that can provide that money without placing a new financial burden on the city.

Kearney said they have found a possible model in the Presidio, the historic San Francisco fort that was closed by the federal government in a 1994 base-closing round. Part of that redevelopment, which also involved making the fort a national park, involved forming a trust to lease property, rather than sell it, to developers.

Lease payments from tenants are providing much of the money needed to pay for maintenance of the Presidio's historic structures, Kearney said.

"That seems like a very good idea about what we can do in the moat and directly around the moat," he said.

City officials hope to translate all the public and private suggestions they've received into a formal conceptual land-use plan for presentation to the Army within the first three months of next year.

Kearney said closed bases have evolved into civilian developments most successfully in communities that plan quickly and without bickering among governmental agencies.

To make sure commercial ideas are dealt with fairly and openly, Kearney said, the city is asking all developers to make proposals to the city manager for later consideration by a broad-based steering committee now being formed.

He said the idea is to have a "fair and open" process rather than one that is heavily political.

"Decisions we make now are for the [city] council that will be sitting here 15 years from now," Kearney said, "and we just have to be sure we do it right."

**Eielson troop cuts bring labor study
REVIEW: Aim is to match work force
skills with Fairbanks needs.**

The Associated Press

Published: December 12, 2005

FAIRBANKS -- Congressionally mandated reductions at Eielson Air Force Base are behind a review of the Fairbanks North Star Borough economy.

The federally funded study aims to learn how to match work force skills to employer needs.

Interviews and telephone surveys are planned with about 450 borough employees to help generate recommendations.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Interior Alaska Regional Council, which includes business and government agents, are overseeing the project.

In November, Congress finalized a plan by the Base Realignment and Closure

Commission that includes a reduction of active personnel at Eielson. Starting within two years and finishing within six, all 18 A-10 jets will be withdrawn from the base, together with approximately 600 personnel. "While Eielson is the reason the study is being done, it's going to look at the entire economy," said Ken Lemke, an economist at Northern Economics Inc., Anchorage-based consultants who'll conduct the study. Loss of the A-10 unit, for example, removes family members who earn and spend money, pay taxes and require services, Lemke said. The commission initially proposed deeper cutbacks at Eielson, and the state received \$615,000 through a U.S. Department of Labor grant to study effects on Alaska's economy. A portion of that grant was allocated for the Eielson study.

Nikki Adams, a regional manager for the state department of labor, said study results will be helpful even though Eielson reductions are not as extensive as planned.

"This is something that our community needs regardless," Adams said.

A study goal is to develop a database of local training programs, including those offered by the University of Alaska Fairbanks, trade unions and the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

With Harvard Help, Arsenal Site Thrives

December 12, 2005

By Paras D. Bhayani

Just three miles west of Harvard Square on the banks of the Charles River lies the Watertown Arsenal, a former military installation that tested and built the nation's most complex weaponry systems for nearly two centuries. At one point it was also one of the most contaminated sites in Massachusetts.

And since 2001, it has belonged to Harvard.

Before Harvard's purchase of the Arsenal property, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the town collaborated on an extensive cleanup effort as part of the process of closing the military complex.

After the environmental hurdles were cleared, the site again became a point of contention after Harvard's purchase, since Watertown residents feared the loss of tax revenue that would result. But in late 2002, the University negotiated a lucrative deal with the town, paying millions each year to compensate for taking commercial property off the tax rolls.

Today, the once-contaminated site, renamed the Arsenal on the Charles, has a thriving mix of educational and commercial uses, including an arts center, a restaurant, and several health clubs.

As Harvard planners look to the future, much of their focus is on the campus that will span the Cambridge and Allston sides of the Charles River. While the University's property in its third host city of Watertown may be small in comparison, it provides both another potential location for expansion and a model for successful community collaboration.

Watertown leaders say that the cleanup and the subsequent commercial growth under Harvard's ownership represent one of the most successful revitalization efforts of any industrial facility in the country.

"I think this has been a really positive redevelopment," says Susan Falkoff, a Watertown city councilor who played a leading role in the cleanup effort. "There was a real commitment at all levels to getting this job done right, and that's

certainly not something you have everywhere.”

CLEANING UP THE MESS

Opened in 1816, the Watertown Arsenal was the first major military laboratory in the U.S., employing over 10,000 people at its height during World War II. After the war, the U.S. Army Research and Materials Laboratory used the Arsenal to test the nation's most cutting-edge artillery systems, transforming it into an advanced research and development facility.

By 1988, however, the Arsenal had become outdated. The U.S. Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that it be closed, and the Department of Defense began a systematic reduction in the Arsenal's activities. The challenge for Watertown, however, had just begun.

The military's operations over the previous decades had left the Arsenal heavily contaminated with pollutants. At the time of the closure recommendation, the work to be done at the complex included cleaning the facilities and soil, decommissioning the remnants of a research reactor, and reclaiming portions of the Charles River.

“Many things about this site were on the cutting edge and were the first of their kind in the nation,” Falkoff says. “The remediation was unusually complex, both technically and bureaucratically.”

Though the Arsenal was once as large as 130 acres, the Pentagon had reduced the site significantly. In 1968, it sold 55 acres to Watertown, which the town redeveloped into the Arsenal Mall and neighboring park. Due to the complexity of the cleanup effort, the EPA split what remained of the site in

1988 into three parts, one of which was the Arsenal buildings that Harvard now owns.

According to the EPA, the soil on the Arsenal's premises and the nearby park were laden with “pesticides, PCBs, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, and ‘poly-aromatic hydrocarbons’” like benzene and other carcinogens.

Further complicating the situation was the fact that the Army's first research reactor had been built at the Arsenal in 1960. Though operations ceased a decade later, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) did not formally shut down the reactor until 1992.

Since the NRC has exclusive jurisdiction over nuclear issues, the EPA and the NRC were each responsible for different sections of the site.

“It's very unusual for a site to require both radiological and toxic remediation,” Falkoff says. “This made it even more complicated.”

In all, the cleanup took nearly 10 years and \$100 million from the federal government. According to a Watertown Arsenal Development Corporation (WADC) report, this represented “one of the most expensive projects of its kind.”

As the cleanup approached its final stages, Watertown created the WADC in January 1997 to spearhead the redevelopment of the complex. After an extensive selection process, the corporation sold the Arsenal to O'Neill Properties, a developer based in King of Prussia, Pa. Because the site still needed a great deal of work, O'Neill paid only \$24 million for the complex, making four separate \$1 million contributions to Watertown charitable causes in addition to the \$20 million purchase price.

The developer then spent the next few years renovating the property, investing \$110 million to make the buildings—which were little more than “empty shells”—suitable for commercial use.

In 2001, O’Neill sold the property to Harvard for \$168 million.

THE ARSENAL ON THE CHARLES

Though Harvard was not a newcomer to Watertown—it had leased 110,000 square feet of space there since 1998—not everyone was initially thrilled with the University’s purchase.

As a nonprofit educational institution, the University is exempt from property taxes. Because Harvard’s acquisition of the Arsenal would remove the land from the tax rolls, Watertown faced the prospect of losing a substantial amount of revenue—one-third of its entire commercial tax base—from a site that it had spent a decade redeveloping.

In order to address the concerns of the community, Harvard entered into negotiations regarding a “payment in lieu of taxes” (PILOT), an annual sum given to the town to compensate for the lost tax revenue, similar to the arrangement that Harvard has with Cambridge and Boston.

In September 2002, Harvard and Watertown entered into a deal for 52 years under which the University would pay a \$3.8 million annual PILOT, an amount that would increase at a 3 percent annual rate. Watertown officials calculated that the PILOT would provide \$480 million in revenue over the life of the agreement. In addition, Harvard agreed to make a one-time contribution of \$500,000 to the Watertown

schools and a \$100,000 annual contribution to a special community enrichment fund.

“[The deal] with Harvard University is one of the best PILOT agreements ever negotiated between a community and a non-profit institution,” the WADC wrote in its close-out report, adding that the deal “provides revenue stability for the next fifty years that would likely exceed tax revenues from a private development.”

Currently the only Harvard-affiliated occupants of the Arsenal are the Harvard Business School Publishing Division and the Harvard Film Archive.

Though there has been talk in the past about moving other sections of the University to Watertown, the administration says that no such plans are currently on the table.

“The Arsenal on the Charles contains 757,244 square feet and the University currently occupies 15.2% of the space,” Mary H. Power, senior director of community relations, writes in an e-mail to *The Crimson*. “The Arsenal is effectively fully leased [to commercial clients] and the University does not have any immediate or near term plans to locate other University departments [at the site].”

But now that Harvard and Watertown have reached an agreement concerning the lost tax revenue, community leaders are less concerned about Harvard’s future plans for the site. Instead, they emphasize that after 17 years of hard work, the massive environmental cleanup is finished, the redevelopment of the property has been paid for, and several new charities and cultural centers have been endowed in the process.

“Overall, this is a victory for the town,” Falkoff says. “For these sorts of cleanups,

you have to take the long view—nothing is ever quick. But I think we’re all satisfied with the work that people at all levels did to get this job done right.”

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

N/A

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

December 13, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

U.S. Shipyard To Lay Off 2,000 as Sub Work Drops

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Lawsuit Filed to Prevent Loss of Aircraft, Defense Jobs from 131st Fighter Wing in St. Louis.

The Megabase for military will cost megabucks

BRAC Implementation Plan on Schedule, Official Says

Environmental success stories

**Okinawa base employees fear loss of jobs
Union members say economic impact of realignment 'disastrous'.**

**Combined bases eye 1,800 jobs
Posts anticipate \$250M
Chamber to promote Decatur in BRAC pitch**

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

U.S. Shipyard To Lay Off 2,000 as Sub Work Drops

By Christopher P. Cavas
Defense News
Naval Warfare

About one in five workers at General Dynamics Electric Boat submarine shipyards is getting a lump of coal for Christmas — the result of declining submarine repair work and the absence of any new submarine designs being considered by the U.S. Navy.

Electric Boat President John Casey told workers Dec. 6 that the company will lay off between 1,900 and 2,400 employees by the end of 2006.

"These reductions are the result of pressure on the Navy's shipbuilding budget," Casey said in an internal company memo.

Casey made the announcement at the company's annual business briefing in Groton, Conn., for state and local leaders from Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Electric Boat has about 11,800 employees, most at its facilities at Groton and Quonset Point, R.I.

The company led the development of the U.S. Navy's Virginia SSN 774-class nuclear attack submarine and is converting four ballistic missile submarines into SSGN cruise missile and special operations boats. But with design work largely coming to a close for both those projects, and the Navy showing no signs of building more than one submarine a year any time soon, the company decided to shrink its work force.

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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“We have to adjust the business accordingly,” company spokesman Bob Hamilton said.

Electric Boat shares construction of the Virginia-class submarines equally with Northrop Grumman’s Newport News, Va., shipyard, and nine submarines currently are under contract. But industry representatives and analysts for years have warned the shipyards would be hard-pressed to maintain their work forces if the Navy sticks to its plans to build only one submarine per year at least through fiscal 2011.

No More Maintenance Work

The company also is facing the loss of its shipyard repair and maintenance work on attack submarines, which two years ago accounted for more than half of its revenue. The Navy is shifting that work to its publicly owned yards, primarily Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in New Hampshire.

The Portsmouth yard was targeted for closure by the Navy, but now will remain open, thanks to a September decision by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Electric Boat, which until a few years ago rarely performed shipyard maintenance work on the submarines it built, had shifted a sizeable portion of its work force to the repair side. Beginning in 2000, the Navy began sending nuclear submarines to Groton for major overhauls because the four government shipyards were full up with reactor refueling work on older Los Angeles SSN 688-class subs. The move enabled the company to keep many of its employees busy despite low construction levels and spread-out submarine work.

But the Navy recently switched two scheduled submarine repair jobs from Electric Boat to Portsmouth, including an upcoming job on the submarine Philadelphia, damaged in September in a collision in the Arabian Gulf. The sub was scheduled for an overhaul at Electric Boat even before the collision, but last month the service handed the job to its Maine shipyard, reportedly

after finding out Electric Boat would charge \$75 million more for the work.

Nevertheless, as Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen said in a letter sent Dec. 5 to Connecticut and Rhode Island senators and congressmen, the end of the submarine refueling program also will end the need to send subs to commercial yards.

“Currently, we are at the peak in our submarine workload, and beginning in Fiscal Year 2008, we will start a decline,” Mullen said in the letter. “At that point, the public shipyards will once again have the capacity to perform all the scheduled maintenance.”

Mullen said Electric Boat “will no longer be called upon” to support major submarine overhauls after current projects are finished.

The decision to shift the work outraged elected officials in Connecticut and Rhode Island, who strenuously fought off a move this year to close the Navy’s New London submarine base — and who also supported keeping open the Portsmouth shipyard.

“I cannot fathom the decision-making in Washington,” Connecticut Gov. Jodi Rell said in a news release. “This decision runs counter in every respect to one of the major reasons cited by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission for keeping SUBASE New London open: the unique and irreplaceable synergy ... between the base and [Electric Boat].”

Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., who represents Groton in Congress, said Dec. 6 he has asked the Navy for a comparison of costs for the Philadelphia job.

“The Navy won’t say why the price is \$75 million higher,” Simmons said. “We’ve asked for a comparison and we’ve been told it’s proprietary. Now give me a break.”

The lawmaker said he will consider asking for a Government Accountability Office investigation into the issue.

But Simmons, a member of the House Armed Services Projection Forces subcommittee, said he also is planning to ask for more money in the upcoming fiscal 2007 budget to advance submarine construction to two subs per year.

The Navy is working on a plan to stabilize the submarine force at 48 boats, but if the one-per-year building rate continues and there are no more refuelings of older boats, the force will drop to less than 30 submarines by the mid-2020s.

“Everyone knows we need two boats per year,” Simmons said. “Let’s get on it, or by the time we get there, we won’t have the workforce to do it.” •

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

We're fortunate with base closure decisions, but FORSCOM is too.

The Fayetteville Observer
December 13, 2005

FORSCOM families don’t know how lucky they are to be moving to Fayetteville. Fort Bragg benefited from BRAC decisions, but so will people transferred to our community. The families from Forces Command and Reserve Command as well, relocated to Fort Bragg because of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission’s decisions, will get shorter commute times and less traffic. (Maybe our traffic lights will even be properly synchronized by the time they arrive, in four years.)

Wherever these future residents live, they will be close to hospitals and will be able to participate in the arts as they did in Atlanta. If they wish, they can still hear a local symphony and take part in community theater. Classrooms in Cumberland County are no more crowded, and sometimes less so, than in some Atlanta suburbs, which are affected by rapid population growth.

Even beyond the advantages that small-city life offers, these new residents will move to a community that cares about how they will adjust. The mix of government officials, business professionals and educators attending a forum last week didn’t spend as much time asking what BRAC could do for us as asking what we should do to prepare for these families.

Housing and real estate professionals were thinking of potential profit — they want to survey the kinds of homes these new residents wish to own. There, too, Atlanta families could also get the better end of the deal in this transition. They will get more houses for the money in the Cape Fear region than in Atlanta.

But for the most part, topics addressed Thursday were about helping 20,000 new residents experience the “hometown feeling” promised in the city’s slogan. The officers and civilians transferred to Fort Bragg have no choice except to come here even if Fayetteville doesn’t improve its “curb appeal,” as a marketing workshop suggested.

Yet, the people attending the workshops at the forum nevertheless wanted to guide new residents. They want to offer a helpful primer of life in the Cape Fear region from A to Z — where parents with an autistic child or caring for an elderly parent with Alzheimer’s can go for information, and on down the list of assistance to how to apply for an X-ray technologist’s job or visit the nearest zoo.

The transfers from Atlanta will miss that city’s amenities. But Fayetteville’s advantage is its focus on military life. Atlanta is a “one size fits all” city offering something for everyone; Fayetteville is a custom fit. FORSCOM families will feel right at home.

**Lawsuit Filed to Prevent Loss of Aircraft,
Defense Jobs from 131st Fighter Wing in
St. Louis**

Kansas City

December 13, 2005

Nixon said the loss of the fighters from the base in St. Louis would deprive the Governor of Missouri of an irreplaceable tool in maintaining homeland security. St. Louis, Mo. - infoZine - Attorney General Jay Nixon yesterday filed a lawsuit in federal district court against Department of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to prevent the transfer of 15 F-15 fighter jets from their current base with the 131st Fighter Wing of the Missouri Air National Guard in St. Louis to units outside Missouri. The transfer would eliminate hundreds of jobs in the St. Louis area.

In May, Rumsfeld presented a report to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) that included the recommendation that all the F-15s be transferred from the base at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. The commission adopted the report's recommendations and transmitted it to President Bush. The President approved the recommendations and forwarded them to Congress. Nixon's lawsuit became ripe for filing after Congress failed to disapprove the report.

Nixon said the loss of the fighters from the base in St. Louis would deprive the Governor of Missouri of an irreplaceable tool in maintaining homeland security. The move of the planes also violates federal law, the lawsuit states, because it would be done without the consent of the Governor.

The Attorney General is asking the court to find that the BRAC recommendations regarding the 131st Fighter Wing are

invalid, null and void. Nixon also is seeking an injunction against the Secretary of Defense to present the transfer of the aircraft.

**The Megabase for military will cost
megabucks**

Dec. 13, 2005

By Edward Colimore

Millions will be spent on construction to unite Dix, McGuire and Lakehurst, U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton said.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are likely to be spent in the next decade on construction to foster the nation's first tri-service military megabase, coordinating the operations of McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix and Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station, U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton said yesterday. The New Jersey Republican, who joined base commanders and community leaders yesterday on a tour of the sprawling Burlington and Ocean County site, said the megabase "will not only have Army, Air Force and Navy forces, but also Marine and Coast Guard components."

"It's the true base of the future," he said.

"The plans are still evolving, but it is shaping up to be a very significant investment."

New facilities will be needed to receive as many as 47 additional aircraft and 1,000 personnel. The Base Closure and Realignment Commission estimated that alone would cost \$108 million - \$42.6 million for Fort Dix and \$65.5 million for McGuire.

Saxton said the Department of Defense's Future Years Defense Plan also called for more than \$150 million in construction at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

"My job will be to go to Washington and try to help fund those projects," said Saxton, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee who has been the chief proponent of the bases. McGuire and Dix are in his district.

Dix is expected to get 1,050 additional jobs and McGuire 779 jobs.

"The bottom line is that we're getting a lot more than we've got" today, said Col. David McNeil, the Dix commander. "We want to embrace it. We are all part of something bigger now."

BRAC Implementation Plan on Schedule, Official Says

Sgt. Sara Wood, USA
American Forces Press Service
WASHINGTON, Dec. 12, 2005

– The Defense Department expects to have a plan to implement Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations early next year, a DoD official said here Dec. 7.

The 2005 BRAC is the largest, most joint-service-oriented round DoD has ever attempted, Philip Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, said in a Pentagon Channel interview. More than 800 installations across the country from the active, National Guard and Reserve components will be affected, Grone said, and 40 percent of the changes will affect more than one service.

"This is larger than anything we've ever attempted in the past, but it's necessary for the transformation of the armed forces and the transformation of our business practices to set about this broad realignment of American domestic military infrastructure," Grone said.

All the components are planning important mission moves, taking into consideration people, schedules and construction, Grone said. DoD civilian organizations are putting together programs to help civilian employees with transition or potential job placement, he added.

"We're trying to take care of our people," he said. "We're also planning to take care of the mission in terms of the move and planning for the construction to support those moves so that the missions can be transitioned in a seamless way."

The general plans for implementing the BRAC recommendations will be in place by February 2006, Grone said. At that time, DoD will be in a better position to develop detailed implementation plans for each installation, he said.

"All these implementation plans - over 241 of them - all have their own pace, their own schedule and their own cost structure," he said.

DoD already is working with BRAC-affected communities, both those that will be losing an installation and those that will be gaining missions, Grone said. Some communities already are taking measures to prepare themselves for the changes, he said. One thing that communities need to do and are doing is to organize early and decide what they want the installations in their areas to look like, he said. This proactive approach will help communities that are losing an installation to use that space effectively and will help communities gaining military missions to realign their infrastructure to prepare for incoming forces, he said.

"It's a highly collaborative effort, Grone said. "And in all of these locations, we can't sustain the installations over the long term without the support of the community, which is so critically important to all of our missions."

Another way DoD is stepping forward to help communities is through a community conference, which will be held in the spring, Grone said. This will allow the communities to have dialogue with DoD representatives and with communities that have been affected by BRAC in the past, he said.

"Everyone has a role to play in this important transformational exercise of the department, and we aim to do this in as seamless a way as possible," he said. "We're all one team in this, and I believe that we've got the capacity and certainly the desire and the requirement to do all this in a way that is effective."

By law, all the BRAC recommendations have to be implemented by 2011, Grone said, and there is no reason to think DoD will have a problem meeting that deadline.

The Nature Conservancy was given the 1,380-acre Long Valley Farm in the Sandhills area of Harnett and Cumberland counties when James Stillman Rockefeller, the great-nephew of oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, died at 102. The tract, near Fort Bragg, is a heavily wooded farm that includes longleaf pine and a cypress swamp with canopy trees 100 feet tall.

**Okinawa base employees fear loss of jobs
Union members say economic impact of
realignment 'disastrous'**

By Chiyomi Sumida, Stars and Stripes
Pacific edition, Tuesday, December 13,
2005

Chiyomi Sumida / S&S

About 50 members of a Japanese base employees' union met Sunday on Okinawa to voice concerns about their job security. The proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Japan is expected to result in the closing of several U.S. military installations south of Kadena Air Base.

GINOWAN — Concerned that some U.S. bases on Okinawa may be closed due to the realigning of U.S. forces in Japan, members of a Japanese base employees' labor union held an emergency conference Sunday. During the two-hour meeting, about 50 Okinawa Garrison Forces Labor Union members, known as Oki Churo, shared their concerns and thoughts.

"If we do not speak up now, the outcome will be disastrous," said Satoru Higa, the pro-base labor union's chairman. "The presence of the military on Okinawa is closely linked to employment and the economy of ... Okinawa."

Although Gov. Keiichi Inamine calls for moving Marine Corps air operations out of Okinawa, citing it as the "consensus of Okinawa," Oki Churo members said not everyone is keen on shutting down bases and moving Marines to Guam and mainland Japan.

"The governor's call for a reduction of the military presence does not represent our voices," said Katsuji China, a firefighter at Camp McTureous. "If he is making the demand by misinterpreting our voices, we need to make our stance clear.

"He is about to rob us of our workplaces," he said.

Takeo Taira, the union's vice chairman, said the realignment's economic impact is immeasurable.

"There is not a single person on Okinawa who would not be affected by the reduction in the military presence," he said.

Communities hosting military bases receive substantial subsidies from Tokyo for bearing the "burden" of hosting the bases. The subsidies would evaporate if the bases close, Taira said.

Taira said the labor union would do all it takes to make sure its members' jobs are protected.

Oki Churo was formed on Okinawa nine years ago as an alternative to the All Japan

Garrison Workers Union, which supports reducing the presence of the U.S. military on Okinawa.

Shinichiro Isa, one of Oki Churo's founders, expressed a strong sense of crisis.

"When the closure of major military bases — including Camp Kinser — was announced, the local media reported it only once. That was all," he said.

"They keep focusing on the voices against the proposed revised airport plan on Camp Schwab, underestimating the impact it will have with the closure of the military bases south of Kadena Air Base," he said.

"The adverse impact of the closure would be disastrous," he said. "No one in our union should lose his or her job through the realignment. We will make sure our voices reach the prefectural and Tokyo governments."

"I am so worried about losing my job if Futenma air station is moved out of Okinawa," said Reiko Shimanaka, who works at MCAS Futenma. "Being a woman and over 40 years old, it would be very difficult for me to find another job."

Masahiro Tokeshi, a cook at Camp Foster's Mess Hall, said he was worried because he heard the newest employees would be laid off first.

"I have been working on base only for four years," he said.

He had an additional concern:

"I am one of the landowners on Camp Kinser," he said, and his family's finances are "based on both my salaries and the rent from the military land."

Combined bases eye 1,800 jobs Posts anticipate \$250M

The Asbury Park Press
12/13/05

BY KIRK MOORE

FORT DIX — At least \$250 million in military construction contracts and nearly 1,800 military and civilian positions could flow into Ocean and Burlington counties as active and reserve units are consolidated at a new "Joint Base New Jersey," according to government officials.

The costs of implementing an administrative merger of Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base and Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station are still unclear, Rep. H. James Saxton, R-N.J., and base officials said Monday in briefings and tours with the Burlington County Military Affairs Committee.

But Saxton said estimates by his aides and the committee's adviser, retired Army Col. Michael Warner, based on Department of Defense information are showing that about \$250 million and possibly as much as \$300 million in construction will be needed at all three bases in the next six to seven years.

Air Force officers said they now anticipate 779 Navy and Marine Corps aviation jobs will migrate to McGuire from the Willow Grove, Pa., naval air reserve station. Saxton and Burlington County committee members were surprised to hear that Fort Dix officers now expect their full-time work force alone could swell by 1,000 people; Saxton said he thought that might be the upper end of all job increases across the bases. The bases now employ around 22,300 people, with 13,000 mostly uniformed jobs at McGuire.

Future job estimates have changed several times since the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission made its decisions last summer, acknowledged Fort Dix commander Col. David McNeil.

"It's fluid because some of these (incoming) organizations are going through transformation themselves," McNeil said.

Plans for merging base management won't be complete until next spring, but so far they call for the Air Force to take on overall management, security and law enforcement on the bases, while Army employees at Fort Dix may take over building and maintenance work, Saxton said.

"What it is not, is the Air Force taking over all the Army and Navy land, and we go away," McNeil noted.

Officials at the bases are proposing hyphenated identities for their facilities, like "Joint Base New Jersey-Fort Dix," to stress both their connectivity and continued service-specific missions, McNeil said.

"We thought it was important we don't lose our lineage, our history, our honors," he said.

Navy and Marine aircraft from Willow Grove and Johnstown, Pa., are the biggest part of the consolidation ordered by the BRAC commissioners. It means McGuire will become the new home to four Navy C-130 Hercules turboprop transports and four C-9 Skytrains, the Navy's version of a civilian Boeing 727 airliner.

A number of helicopters are to be transferred, too, including 10 heavy Marine CH-53 Sea Stallions. McGuire officers said they are looking at potential sites on either end of the Air Force flight line to build new Navy facilities.

Saxton said there's also some consideration toward basing helicopters at Lakehurst, where the New Jersey National Guard is already planning to center its rotorcraft fleet.

"There are a couple of factors that mitigate in favor of that. They have the hangars, they have the ramp space (parking area). Another factor is helicopters don't always mix well with fixed-wing (air) traffic," Saxton said.

One question is whether the BRAC commission's decision legally mandates the helicopters operate from McGuire, but Saxton said he's advising defense planners they should allow that flexibility as the services sort out how to best implement the joint-base plan.

"We've been doing joint stuff here a long time," observed McNeil of Fort Dix. "This is the only place in the continental United States where the Army, Navy and Air Force have bases with contiguous boundaries. The only other place is Pearl Harbor."

Together, the three bases comprise about 42,000 acres, further buffered by tens of thousands of public forests in the Pinelands, said Col. Rick Martin, commander of the 305th Air Mobility Wing at McGuire.

Lakehurst will have a practice area for battlefield and remote airfield operations, "which is absolutely critical for the C-17," said Martin, whose wing now has a squadron with 13 of the heavy combat airlifters. "The C-17 provides that strategic range to get into very small airfields anywhere in the world."

Chamber to promote Decatur in BRAC pitch

By Martin Burkey
DAILY Staff Writer
December 13, 2005

Decatur officials will travel to Arlington, Va., next month to woo Army employees to live in Morgan County.

The Decatur City Council reviewed with no discussion Monday \$10,000 for the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce to use for its Pentagon Base Realignment and Closure efforts.

Chamber Vice President Jim Page said five Decatur community leaders, including education and real estate representatives, will fly to Arlington in January for the first of several community briefings for Army employees whose jobs are moving to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville.

Community officials can expect several trips annually over the next two to four years as the phased move occurs, Page said. Army officials expect the recent round of Pentagon base closures will bring 4,714 jobs to Redstone, as well as up to 5,000 private contractor jobs.

In addition to Arlington, the jobs will come from two other Virginia agencies, two in Georgia and one at Fort Rucker in South Alabama, Page said.

The new jobs will mean some \$416 million in new construction on the arsenal for which Morgan County contractors can compete, he said. Also, 703 current jobs at Redstone that will move to other bases, he said.

Army workers will get a briefing on the entire area before being allowed into another room where area communities that participated in base closing efforts will have tables set up to promote their communities, Page said. The Morgan County sales pitch will include a display board, video and brochures. "That's where we can really sell Decatur and Morgan County," he said. The council is scheduled to vote on the appropriation Monday at 10 a.m.

RealShare EXCLUSIVE: Government Agencies' Demand for Space Will Be Key Issue

By Barbra Murray
December 12, 2005

MCLEAN, VA-A long list of insiders and powerful players in the area's commercial real estate arena are preparing to congregate at tomorrow's first Real Share Northern Virginia conference, produced by Real Estate Media Network, the parent company of Real Estate Forum and GlobeSt.com. The half-day event will take place at the Ritz-Carlton Tyson's Corner where more than 200 representatives of the real estate investment, development and services businesses will dissect the dynamics that have put Northern Virginia near the top of the nation's most successful commercial real estate markets.

"Real Share Northern Virginia will bring together the market's leading dealmakers and figures for a combination of top-shelf information and terrific networking--and attendees can be back in their offices before noon," says Richard Kelley, director of the Real Share conference series. "That's a great combination, and we look forward to a great event in one of the most active and exciting markets in the country."

Benefiting from its position as a suburb of Washington, DC, Northern Virginia has been thriving, in part, due to the government's increase in demand for space for the growing US Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies. Other factors include the resulting desire for government contractors to locate near the agencies, and other businesses' need for more options and lower rental rates than those available in the District. "Northern Virginia is an exciting, roller-coaster market, and for the past year it has been red-hot," Kelley adds. "We cover the market to a good degree at our annual Real Share Washington, DC conference, but we felt this is a market that warrants special attention and its own event, and as evidenced by the strong attendance we expect tomorrow, the market evidently agrees."

The conference will kick off with a town hall meeting headlined "Can the Good Times Last?" It will explore the market's rise in the shadow of Washington, DC, as well as its unique attributes. Issues to be addressed include what role the government might play with regard to future large space needs, or lack thereof, as a consequence of the US Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure plans; and the potential saturation of the of the condominium market due to the proliferation of condo conversions and new condo developments. Sitting on the panel will be Jones Lang LaSalle's W. Michael Ellis, CarrAmerica's David Bevirt, Opus East's Scott Brody, Lerner Enterprises' Arthur Fuccillo, the US General Services Administration's Jim Smale, Trammell Crow Co.'s Spencer Stouffer and Cushman & Wakefield's David Webb. Additionally, a series of breakout sessions on such subjects as the characteristics of investors that are most active in the market, multifamily market dynamics and property financing will allow attendees to take a closer look at these issues.

Opinions/ Editorials

That Sinking Feeling
December 13, 2005
BNH

The December 6 announcement by General Dynamics Corp. that it would slash between 1,900 and 2,400 jobs at its Electric Boat shipyard in Groton was certainly a body blow to the economy of southeastern Connecticut.

Even more ominous was the announcement by company President John Casey that the number of jobs cuts might rise to as much as 50 percent of Electric Boat's total workforce of 11,800 by 2008, as the U.S. continues to shift submarine repair and maintenance to its own naval shipyards.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell's reaction was quick and, well, reactive. "We fought the sub base closure - and we will fight these job cuts as well," Rell said. "We won on the sub base and I intend to win on this one."

Connecticut's "win" on sparing the Groton sub base from the depredations of the Base Realignment & Closure Commission is probably Pyrrhic at best. The Navy is in the middle of downsizing of its submarine force by as much as 40 percent. The Navy is not currently designing a next-generation submarine, and work to redesign earlier vessels for new missions is winding down.

These are realities of the geopolitical and military climate of the 21st century - and far beyond the ken of tiny Connecticut.

In a state that has ranked 50th in the nation in job-creation since 1989 (see story, page 6), we agree that it's all about the jobs. But state government might be wiser to ease impediments to companies in growth industries rather than desperately cling to unsalvageable jobs in declining ones.

Environmental success stories

By Jack Betts,
The Charlotte Observer, N.C.
Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News
December 13, 2005

OPINION: Environmental success stories

By Jack Betts, The Charlotte Observer, N.C.
Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News

Dec. 11 - While North Carolina faces an array of environmental challenges to protect its land, water and air, it's also fortunate to have developed an environmental preservation ethic that has led to a growing list of success stories. Here are a few:

1. The Land Trust movement

The Piedmont Land Conservancy in Greensboro is one of a couple of dozen nonprofit groups, including the Catawba Lands Conservancy, working to preserve the state's land, waters and natural heritage through a variety of means.

Land trusts sometimes buy land, help arrange conservation easements and management plans that will protect it from development and sometimes broker donations of property for parks or refuges.

Since its founding in 1990, the Piedmont Land Conservancy has protected about 11,300 acres in nine central Piedmont counties -- 6,000 acres donated and 5,300 acres either purchased or acquired at below appraised value.

One of its most compelling stories is its decision to pursue the creation of a farmland preservation corridor in an area between Liberty and Randleman, south of Greensboro.

Working with owners whose families have farmed the land for generations, the conservancy has put together funding from local governments, foundations and state and federal trust funds to protect 1,000 acres of beautiful, rolling farmlands in a fast-growing section of the Piedmont. The project keeps family farms whole, protects the scenic landscape and helps keep waterways clean.

For more, visit the group's Web site at www.piedmontland.org and follow the links to other land trusts in North Carolina.

2. N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund

The N.C. General Assembly sometimes deserves criticism for its failure to act proactively on environmental protection, and sometimes it deserved rave reviews. It deserves special thanks in 2005 for fully funding the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund for the first time with a \$100 million appropriation. Run by former Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Bill Holman, the fund works across the state to help identify, design and help pay for land and water acquisition projects. It helps provide buffers set aside natural areas and preserve wetlands that help filter runoff and keep surface and groundwater clean.

3. Military cooperation

In a state that is economically dependent upon large military bases, North Carolina has a big stake in maintaining good relations.

Unlike Virginia, which allowed residential development near Naval Air Station Oceana until the Base Closure and Realignment Commission began to talk of relocating the base, N.C. environmental interests put together some creative funding to buy 37,500 acres of buffers around Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. Those buffers provide wildlife habitat and ensure that residential development would not be an immediate problem.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld took note of the state's cooperation with the military in a speech in August, quoting the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources as saying that "military bases are now among that state's most environmentally conscious communities."

4. Local government leadership

Environmentalists point to a number of local governments that are providing leadership to reduce pollution, ameliorate anticipated effects of global warming and use resources more efficiently. Outgoing Asheville Mayor Charles Worley signed the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement committing the city to pursue more fuel-efficient staff cars and design more efficient buildings. Meanwhile, the city of Charlotte decided to add two dozen hybrid electric vehicles to its fleet, expanding on an earlier decision to reduce fuel consumption and emit fewer pollutants.

5. The Coastal Federation's wetlands and oyster restoration

The N.C. Coastal Federation has long combined education, advocacy, policy development and preservation projects to help restore and preserve the state's coastal region.

One of its most admirable efforts is its project to restore wetlands to the North River Farms area of Carteret County as a prelude to fostering a return of the oyster population. When the vast acreage was cleared for agricultural production, wetlands largely disappeared, and storm runoff in the area sent oyster beds into further decline.

The federation has acquired acreage and begun to restore the wetlands that filter storm runoff and reintroduce a forest of bald cypress, water tupelo, Atlantic white cedar, black gum, green ash and silky dogwood. The federation hopes to plant 6,000 trees as part of the 5,100-acre project.

For more information about paying for one or more of those trees, go to www.nccoast.org.

6. N.C.'s Ecosystem Enhancement Program and other efforts

State agencies have success stories, too. One is the Ecosystem Enhancement Program, which combined efforts by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation to mitigate the loss of wetlands.

Instead of delaying highways and other transportation projects because of environmental concerns, the program protects natural areas and creates new wetlands to compensate for the potential loss of wetlands from forthcoming projects. Since 2003 it has created 7,600 acres of wetlands with another 1,500 in the works, without delaying any of the \$1.9 billion in transportation projects that required wetlands mitigation.

State regulatory efforts evidently have reduced nitrogen in the Neuse River -- thought to be related to fish kills on that river, and to a reduction in agricultural nutrients that degrade waters in the Tar-Pamlico basin. These are remarkable reductions that either meet or exceed the targets set by the state in major river basins feeding Pamlico Sound.

The state is also expanding its parks system, adding more than 300 acres to Mayo River State Park just last week. It is also developing the Haw River State Park north of Greensboro, the Hickory Nut Gap park east of Asheville and the Carvers Creek park in Cumberland County, significant expansions of the state system.

7. Private donations of important lands

Every so often a private donor makes available a biologically diverse tract of land or waterway, and groups like The Nature

Conservancy are there to inventory it, receive it and make sure it's handled appropriately.

Additional Notes

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY BIRD

December 16, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

National News Articles

Local News Articles

Tech Park at Crane gets boost from state

Local DFAS plan becomes official

Pentagon: Realignment, Closures on Schedule

Board Lays Out Goals for Legislative Session

Sold Out Group Hears DOD's Col. Cullis Launch MAPPS Washington Policy Forum.

Back in uniform Richard Wells ready to take over at NPS

Additional Notes

Department of Defense Releases

National News Articles

Local News Articles

Tech Park at Crane gets boost from state
\$1 million in support tied to creation of jobs; 2 tenants signed
Indianapolis Star
By Erika D. Smith
December 16, 2005

Indiana is throwing its weight behind a long-sought-after technology office park at the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane.

By late 2006, the West Gate at Crane Technology Park will be under way with at least two tenants and a pledge of \$1 million in state funding.

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and Secretary of Commerce Patricia Miller made the announcement Thursday in Bloomington, not far from the cornfield-surrounded Crane.

The military facility has the highest-paid work force in Southern Indiana and is known for its high-tech research and logistics. The state's goal is to get companies to move in around Crane, creating a foundation of high-growth, lucrative industries in a region that hasn't seen much economic development.

"It's a new era for the region," said West Gate spokesman Michael Snyder. "People have been working for this for over a decade, and now it's finally starting to happen."

The biggest driver is likely to be West Gate's acceptance into the Indiana Certified Technology Park program. Administered by the Indiana Economic Development Corp., the program is meant to encourage high-end business opportunities and the transfer of technology between companies and universities. That translates into dollars for Daviess, Greene and Martin counties -- where West Gate will be located.

Those counties now can keep state income tax revenue generated by West Gate employees and sales tax from some surrounding businesses, such as hotels.

The limit is \$10 million, and all of that must be put back into developing West Gate.

A certified technology park designation also will make it easier for the counties to attract government dollars because their efforts will be coordinated.

"It's really hard to have three different counties running a park," said IEDC spokesman Weston Sedgwick.

West Gate will get up to \$1 million from IEDC. How and when West Gate receives that grant money will be tied to how many jobs are created.

Next year alone, West Gate probably will create 40 to 60 jobs paying \$40,000 to \$100,000 a year, he said. West Gate eventually could hold hundreds of businesses, spanning more than 1,000 acres.

Science Applications International Corp., the nation's seventh-largest defense contractor, and EG&G Technical Services already have agreed to lease space in the park. Both already do business at Crane.

Several schools, including Purdue University and the University of Indianapolis, have made commitments, too.

The widespread support is expected to ward off future attempts to shutter Crane. In August, the military facility was spared under the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure process.

Local DFAS plan becomes official

The Plain Dealer

Friday, December 16, 2005

Sabrina Eaton and Becky Gaylord

Cleveland job gain of 500 affirmed

Washington- The Defense Finance and Accounting Service formally unveiled a plan Thursday that will bring 500 new jobs to Cleveland by consolidating its offices around the country.

DFAS Director Zack Gaddy said in a statement that changes under a sweeping Pentagon base

closure program would "streamline DFAS operations and support our goal to provide best value to the warfighter."

DFAS offices in Cleveland and Columbus will each gain between 600 and 700 accounting jobs in the short term, Ohio members of Congress said at a news conference. Existing facilities in the two cities will accommodate the extra workers, although new construction is possible. The number of new jobs in both towns will shrink to 500 through attrition by 2011, they said.

Attorney Fred Nance, who helped lead Cleveland's campaign to keep DFAS, said the business community will continue to pursue a plan to move the defense workers to a new development in the Flats.

Developer Scott Wolstein has announced plans for the \$230 million Flats East Bank Neighborhood with backing from the city, the port authority and other public entities. DFAS would likely be one of the largest tenants, if the office were to move there from the Federal Office Building on East Ninth Street.

The new Cleveland jobs will pay \$54,000 on average, said Concord Township Republican Rep. Steve LaTourette. He said 90 percent of the jobs will be new hires, because DFAS officials don't expect many employees in closed offices to transfer.

"This will be a tremendous economic boost for the city of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio," predicted Cleveland Democratic Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, who attended the press conference with LaTourette, Cleveland Democratic Rep. Dennis Kucinich and Columbus Republican Rep. Pat Tiberi.

"We have to be thankful," Cleveland DFAS employee Troy Marshall said after workers received plan details on Thursday. "We're going down on our knees thinking about the ones that are closing. It could've been us."

Pentagon: Realignment, Closures on Schedule

December 15, 2005
Bethesda Journal

By Army Sgt. Sara Wood
American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department expects to have a plan to implement Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations early next year, a Defense official said last week.

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure is the largest, most joint-service-oriented round the Pentagon has ever attempted, Philip Grone, deputy undersecretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, said in a Pentagon Channel interview. More than 800 installations across the country from the active, National Guard and Reserve components will be affected, Grone said, and 40 percent of the changes will affect more than one service.

"This is larger than anything we've ever attempted in the past, but it's necessary for the transformation of the armed forces and the transformation of our business practices to set about this broad realignment of American domestic military infrastructure," Grone said.

All the components are planning important mission moves, taking into consideration people, schedules and construction, Grone said. Defense civilian organizations are putting together programs to help civilian employees with transition or potential job placement, he added.

"We're trying to take care of our people," he said. "We're also planning to take care of the mission in terms of the move and planning for the construction to support those moves so that the missions can be transitioned in a seamless way."

The general plans for implementing the recommendations will be in place by February 2006, Grone said. At that time, the Pentagon will be in a better position to develop detailed

implementation plans for each installation, he said.

"All these implementation plans -- over 241 of them -- all have their own pace, their own schedule and their own cost structure," he said.

The Defense Department is already working with affected communities, both those that will be losing an installation and those that will be gaining missions, Grone said. Some communities already are taking measures to prepare themselves for the changes, he said.

One thing communities need to do and are doing is to organize early and decide what they want the installations in their areas to look like, he said. This proactive approach will help communities losing an installation to use space effectively and will help communities gaining military missions to realign their infrastructure to prepare for incoming forces, he said.

"It's a highly collaborative effort," Grone said. "And in all of these locations, we can't sustain the installations over the long term without the support of the community, which is so critically important to all of our missions."

Another way the Defense Department is stepping forward to help communities is through a community conference, which will be held in the spring, Grone said. This will allow the communities to have dialogue with Defense representatives and with communities Base Realignment and Closure recommendations have been affected in the past, he said.

"Everyone has a role to play in this important transformational exercise of the department, and we aim to do this in as seamless a way as possible," he said. "We're all one team in this, and we've got the capacity and certainly the desire and the requirement to do all this in a way that is effective."

By law, all recommendations have to be implemented by 2011, Grone said, and there is no reason the Defense Department will not meet that deadline.

Board Lays Out Goals for Legislative Session

Main issues affecting county are affordable housing, rights of immigrants and BRAC.

By Seth Rosen

December 14, 2005

The Arlington County Board unveiled to the public its legislative package for the 2006 General Assembly session during its meeting last weekend. Board members are urging legislators in Richmond to support the county's new affordable housing plan preserve the rights of immigrants and increase the minimum wage. They are also seeking greater funding for transportation, psychiatric beds in hospitals and to retain research facilities affected by the BRAC process.

Board members held a work session with Arlington's legislative delegation on Nov. 29 to expound on its priorities. The 2006 session begins Jan. 11 and lasts for two months. This year is a "long session," in which lawmakers must adopt a two-year state budget.

Some of the board's top priorities include:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The board is asking the General Assembly to codify its new affordable housing compromise, which was forged with developers and community activists in October after months of contentious negotiations.

The plan requires developers to provide affordable units, or contribute money to a housing fund, whenever the county board grants projects additional density beyond what is permitted by-right. The amount of money, or units, supplied by developers would be according to a sliding scale based on the project's size.

Board members are also seeking tax incentives for the preservation of affordable housing and the ability for the county to purchase land to strengthen the inexpensive housing stock.

Additionally, the county would like a law that requires developers to notify localities of condo conversions in advance.

HOMEOWNERS TAX RELIEF

Last year Del. Bob Brink shepherded a

constitutional amendment on home-owner's tax relief through the House of Delegates, but a similar amendment was killed in the state Senate. The act would have exempted up to \$100,000 of the value of residents' homes from taxation. During the gubernatorial campaign, Timothy Kaine proposed a similar measure that would make the first 20 percent of the value of one's home free from taxation.

The county is hoping this year the General Assembly will grant localities the authority to enact a homestead exemption. The average residential real estate assessment is projected to grow by more than 20 percent, the sixth straight year with a double digit increase. The state mandates a single tax rate for commercial and residential properties, restricting the amount of tax relief the county can provide to homeowners. "This is a very important issue in Arlington because no matter how much we lower the rate, people will still be paying more," board member Paul Ferguson said.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

The board opposes the restrictions on county services and programs for immigrants that some members of the General Assembly may try to pass this session. Republican delegates announced in November that they would introduce an array of bills to curtail the number of government resources available to illegal immigrants.

One bill would forbid publicly funded day-labor work centers, like the Shirlington Employment and Education Center, unless they require proof of legal residency.

Republican lawmakers also intend to re-introduce legislation that would bar illegal immigrants from attending state universities and colleges, or at least require them to pay out-of-state tuition.

Without naming them specifically, Board member Walter Tejada denounced these proposed bills and called them "misguided and misinformed."

"We can expect an antagonistic and negative environment in the General Assembly this year," Tejada said during the board meeting last Saturday. "We will do our best to bring the facts forward and show there are a lot of benefits of having a big immigrant community in Virginia."

MINIMUM WAGE

Del. Al Eisenberg (D-47) and Vincent Callahan Jr. (R-34) are set to co-sponsor a bill that would increase Virginia's minimum wage. It has remained unchanged, at \$5.15 an hour, since 1997. Eisenberg's bill would increase the minimum wage by \$1 each of the next three years.

The board voted unanimously to support the proposal.

"Minimum wage is not a livable wage," said Eisenberg, during an interview in October. "The value of that wage has eroded thanks to inflation and our poorest workers are not getting the full benefit. How many CEOs have been without a raise in eight years?"

TRANSPORTATION

Board members are asking the General Assembly to provide a "stable, reliable and permanent source of funding" for all modes of transportation, and a "dedicated source" of funding for Metro. The board also would like legislators to fully fund the state's statutory 95 percent share of transit operating and capitol costs, with approximately \$200 million in additional funds.

BRAC FUNDING

In the wake of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission's decisions this past August, the county is seeking state money to retain research agencies in Arlington and to help companies move to vacated space.

Gov. Mark Warner has made a verbal commitment to supply \$10 million to transfer the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency and the Office of Naval Research within Arlington, if necessary. The governor's Northern Virginia BRAC Working Group, which included County Board Chairman Jay Fisetete, recently recommended the state provide funds for a job training center in Crystal City and incentives, such as tax credits, to entice small businesses to move into buildings hit by the BRAC process. "It is critically important for Arlington to have help from both the state and federal government," said state Sen. Mary Margaret Whipple (D-31), after the November legislative work session. "There will be a very significant

impact from losing so many jobs and we will need assistance."

PAY RAISE

Board members are petitioning the General Assembly for a pay raise this legislative session. Arlington is one of two jurisdictions in the state that must specifically ask the General Assembly for a raise and the only one with a cap on how much board members may earn.

"The board is asking to be treated just like other jurisdictions that do not have to ask the General Assembly for this authority," Vice Chair Chris Zimmerman said.

The chairman of the board, currently Fisetete, earns \$32,474.02 a year and the other four members make \$29,521.83. The board members are seeking an annual salary "in the mid-40s," Fisetete said.

Though salaries are adjusted annually on a cost-of-living formula, with an increase of approximately \$1,000 last year, the boards last official pay hike was in 1997.

Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors including the chairman receive \$59,000 a year. In Loudoun County the chairman of the Board of Supervisors makes \$40,000, the other supervisors \$22,400.

PSYCHIATRIC BEDS

another priority for the board is to secure increased funds in Northern Virginia for the purchase of additional psychiatric hospital beds. The board would also like the state to raise the daily rate for inpatient beds, so that hospitals have a greater incentive to take in more psychiatric patients, and increase funding for the discharge of patients into community-based services.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES:

- Increase funding for the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund to aid the Chesapeake Bay
- Permit benefit coverage for domestic partners and dependents by public employers as currently permitted for private employers
- Oppose a second resolution for a constitutional amendment to limit the meaning of marriage
- Extend state hate crimes statute to include

sexual orientation

— Increase state funding for the Public Defender's Office, district court employees and probation officers

**Sold Out Group Hears DOD's Col. Cullis Launch MAPPS Washington Policy Forum. December 16, 2005
Geo Community Spatial News**

A Defense Installation Spatial Data Infrastructure (DISDI) that includes an Installation Visualization Tool (IVT), a tool that assisted with the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC), will provide base data for such core Defense Department functions as human resource management, weapon system lifecycle management, materiel supply and service management, real property and installation lifecycle management, and financial management. That was the message Colonel Brian Cullis (USAF), Special Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment for Geospatial Information Policy and Executive Manager of the Defense Installation Spatial Data Infrastructure told members of MAPPS on December 8.

Col. Cullis was the featured speaker at the inaugural MAPPS Washington Policy Forum. His presentation, "Geo-Enabling the DoD Business Enterprise," highlighted the new attention being given to the role of geospatial information resources and spatial technologies in achieving the goals of the business modernization management program for the Department of Defense. He noted that the DISDI and IVT can become a model for a geospatially enabled, U.S. Government-wide, Federal real property asset management inventory. MAPPS has been a leader in promoting legislation in Congress, H.R. 1370, and the Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform (FLAIR) Act, introduced by Rep. Chris Cannon (R-UT), to provide a cadastre of Federal property. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has found that DOD lacks reliable information about the quantity, location, condition, and value of inventory and property and that "ineffective and

inefficient asset management and accountability leave the department vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse" and that the environmental liability amounts presented in DOD's financial statements were not reliable because the department did not have (1) sufficient guidance for identifying and categorizing cleanup activities whose costs must be included in the liability calculation, (2) complete inventories of the sites and weapons systems that will require cleanup or containment. Cullis called DISDI a significant tool in improvement in DoD business systems modernization.

The new MAPPS Washington Policy Forum is designed to provide a forum for MAPPS member firm principals based in the Washington, DC area, those from out of town who are visiting the Nation's Capitol, as well as marketing and government affairs consultants to MAPPS member firms, was held at the City Club at Franklin Square. The next Forum will be on Thursday, February 9, also at the City Club, 1300 I (Eye) St, NW, Washington, DC. The speaker will be announced shortly. For the announcement and further information, see UPCOMING MEETINGS on the MAPPS web site, www.mapps.org.

MAPPS is the only U.S. trade and professional association of private geospatial firms. Formed in 1982, MAPPS has more than 150 private sector firms from all aspects of the geospatial profession. Its member firms are in the mapping, spatial data and geographic information systems field engaged in mapping, photogrammetry, satellite and airborne remote sensing, aerial photography, hydrography, aerial and satellite image processing, GPS and GIS data collection, integration and conversion services. For information, including membership application and registration for the Washington Policy Forum luncheon, visit the association's website at www.mapps.org

Back in uniform

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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Richard Wells ready to take over at NPS
 Herald News
 By Julia Reynolds
 December 16, 2005

Less than two weeks ago, Texas journalist Richard Wells dusted off an old identity, tried it on and found, to his delight, that it still fit.

Today, in an afternoon ceremony, Wells will officially reclaim that identity when he becomes the new president of the Naval Postgraduate School, succeeding Rear Adm. Patrick Dunne, who has headed NPS since January 2004.

A few years ago, Wells thought he had retired from the military.

But when he recently returned to Monterey and sailors again addressed him as rear admiral, he felt at home.

"These are my band of brothers and sisters," he said.

Still settling into a bare office, the 63-year-old Wells walked the 100-year-old halls of the former Hotel Del Monte and basked in afternoon light that filled the school's hallways.

"I love journalism, but when I put this uniform on, I'm a military officer first," he said.

Wells has spent his life alternating between some of the world's most far-flung tours of duty -- beat reporter, professor, Navy diver, public relations man and de-facto statesman who's nurtured fledgling democracies.

More than 30 years ago, he was an enlisted sailor with the Naval Security Group, the Navy's

high-level command in charge of secret communications. He was a deep-sea diver and salvage officer. Then a reservist. He was a public relations officer at the Pentagon.

By the 1980s he was a reporter, copy editor and assistant news editor at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the now-defunct Dallas Times-Herald.

Back then, Wells said, reporters were more fun and newspaper stories only had one headline, not the two or three that "give away the whole story" these days.

Oh, but that was his former self talking.

Until a few weeks ago, he was a journalism professor and department chairman at the University of North Texas, known for cutting-edge programs in fields such as literary nonfiction and environmental journalism.

He says he doesn't mind the dramatic switch in vocations, because to him they're really not that different.

"Journalism and the military have a lot more in common than people think," he said. "Their very reason for being is based on the U.S. Constitution. When you think about it, their basic tenet is the well-being of the country."

Wells, who previously worked as superintendent of NPS in 2000, said he only had to think for a second about returning to Monterey.

"To me, NPS is like a mini State Department," he said.

Earlier in the year, Wells went to Mongolia with a group from the naval school's Center for Civil-Military Relations, where on and off -- and out of uniform -- he's been an adjunct professor since 1999. In Mongolia, which wrested itself from seven decades of Soviet rule in the 1990s, his team met with members of Parliament, military leaders, nongovernmental groups and journalists still dealing with the country's transition to democracy.

"It's not instant," he said, but it's a pleasure to work with new democracies, where people are eager to learn.

Now Wells won't be going on those educational-diplomatic junkets anymore, at least not as a professor.

"I have just one job now -- president of NPS."

As the naval school's new chief, one of the changes Wells will face is a yet-to-be-named oversight board, mandated this year by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

A single board will soon coordinate curricula between the Navy school and the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. The permanent oversight panel is empowered to eliminate unnecessary curricula, create collaborative programs between the schools and expand programs at "private institutions of higher learning."

Based in the Washington, D.C., area. The board will be made up of equal numbers of NPS and Air Force institute advisers, plus civilian education authorities recommended by the

Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Defense.

Several duplicate programs already have been shut down at each school.

Wells said board members have not yet been designated, but added that NPS is likely to continue expanding its programs, including more students from all branches of the military.

As home to international institutions such as NPS, the University of California, Stanford University and the Defense Language Institute, Wells said he sees the Northern California coast as a major learning hub akin to Boston.

"In higher education, we talk about centers of education," he said. "From San Francisco down to Monterey, look at all we have to offer."

Lately, though, Wells has found himself playing the student's role. In the 10 days since he arrived in Monterey, he said he has learned a lot, especially from Dunne.

And once in charge, Wells said, his first goal is to learn more.

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Indians voice interest in a Maine base

By Associated Press
December 18, 2005

BRUNSWICK, Maine -- Maine's Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Indian tribes have expressed interest in the Brunswick Naval Air Station, which is likely to be redeveloped after its closure.

The tribes are ruling out such ideas as a casino or a liquefied natural gas terminal at the site, which is being decommissioned as part of the base realignment and closure process.

The Navy is scheduled to leave the more than 3,000-acre site in 2011.

"We're not interested in being mavericks," said Tim Love, an economic development adviser to the Penobscots.

Craig Francis, general counsel for the Passamaquoddies, said: "The tribe's thinking is that it's an opportunity that could be a win-win for everybody."

The two tribes expressed their interest in letters to the US Interior Department.

The Penobscots appear to have a clearer idea of what they'd do with the property, such as manufacturing a wood-based product, doing aviation maintenance and manufacturing airplane parts, or production of renewable energy. Love said the tribe intends to form a partnership with an existing business.

The Passamaquoddies are not publicizing specific plans.

"We're open-minded to anything," Francis said. "It's going to really depend on how they think the land or the base is going to be redeveloped."

Unlike previous base closures, in which the Pentagon has given away the land, the base under the current process is to be sold. The government will seek fair market value for the property.

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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The two tribes in 2003 lost a statewide referendum on their proposal to develop a casino. Now, they are hoping that a collaborative approach will help them win a share of the possibilities in Brunswick.

"Whatever is done, we'll do it collectively," Love said.

**Va. Beach seeks to keep jets at Oceana
Vote set on city plan seen as compromise with
base commission**

By Bill Geroux

Time -Dispatch Staff Writer

Dec, 18 2005

VIRGINIA BEACH - City leaders will try to retain the Navy jets and 12,000 jobs at Oceana Naval Air Station while disregarding the most burdensome demands of the military base-closing commission, which has threatened to move the planes.

The City Council will vote Tuesday on a plan for keeping the jets that does not include seizing and demolishing any of the thousands of homes and businesses on the ends of Oceana's runways - despite an ultimatum from the commission to do so.

Instead, Virginia Beach hopes to get by with halting new development in the crash zones near the runways and limiting development in other areas subject to jet noise.

Under the council plan, which is likely to pass, the city will ask the General Assembly next month for permission to use eminent domain to condemn roughly 40 acres of vacant land in the crash zones to prevent development there.

Virginia Beach leaders, in interviews last week, called their approach a reasonable compromise and said they hope it will satisfy the Defense Department's inspector general's office, whose job it is to enforce the orders of the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission, known as BRAC.

The inspector general's office is required to decide by June whether Virginia Beach has complied with the BRAC order, which has the force of federal law.

"The city has a plan we can do, and it meets the intent of the BRAC order," said Vice Mayor Louis R. Jones, choosing his words carefully. "We just want to do it a little differently."

"The most important thing is the city of Virginia Beach drew the line at condemning people's homes. We weren't willing to do that."

Jennifer Meyers, a congressional specialist for the base-closing commission, acknowledged that it has no enforcement powers of its own and is scheduled to disband in June. But she said Virginia Beach risks losing the jets by ignoring any part of the commission's order.

BRAC's threat to move the jets to Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Fla., lost steam when Jacksonville officials changed direction and announced they no longer wanted them.

But Meyers said Florida or another state could re-enter the picture. "This is a very interesting issue that's not going away anytime soon," she said of Oceana.

The city has until March 31 to respond formally to the BRAC ultimatum, but Jones and Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf said the city would notify the inspector general's office immediately of how it plans to proceed. Feedback from the inspector general's office could alter the plan, they said.

Jones said he did not think any amount of feedback would change the council's mind about seizing homes to save Oceana. Oberndorf agreed, although she added, "I never say never."

Oberndorf said she hopes the inspector general's office would consult closely with the Navy about Oceana. The Navy did not propose moving its more than 200 F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet jets from Oceana, and the chief of naval operations testified at a BRAC hearing

that the Navy prefers to keep the jets at Oceana, at least for now.

The Navy has complained for decades that encroaching development around the air base limits the ability of pilots to simulate landing on aircraft carriers.

This year the BRAC commissioners, particularly Chairman Anthony J. Principi, concluded that the Virginia Beach City Council had carelessly allowed development to flourish around the jet base, endangering aviators and residents.

The commission added Oceana to its list of target bases because of the encroachment issue, and in the middle of the hearings, officials from Jacksonville offered to take Oceana's jets and reopen Cecil Field.

The commission voted in August to give Virginia Beach a choice: Clear homes and businesses from Oceana's main crash zones - generally swaths of land 2,000 feet from the ends of runways - or surrender the jets to Jacksonville.

Virginia Beach officials counted more than 3,400 homes and scores of businesses in the crash zones, and many of the structures predated Oceana's development into a major jet base. The homeowners included many Oceana retirees.

But before Virginia Beach took any action, Jacksonville officials publicly abandoned their bid for the jets, overwhelmed by protests from Jacksonville residents about jet noise and other issues well-known to people in Virginia Beach. Jacksonville's mayor defended his brief courtship of the jets as exploring an economic-development opportunity.

Jacksonville's exit left the Navy with no obvious alternative to Oceana, at least in the short term, and has prompted Virginia and city officials to declare the BRAC order flawed. They have been parsing the language of the order with an eye for how the inspector general might interpret it in the city's favor.

The Navy also is conducting a study of its long-term plans for Oceana. The Navy has suggested it may want a new base when the Super Hornet is replaced by the Joint Strike Fighter, but that could be many years away.

"The Navy always just wanted us to limit future development," said Robert Matthias, the city lobbyist. "They have learned to live with the development that was already there."

Matthias said the city and Navy had been working on a joint land-use plan to limit growth around Oceana, and that the plan for dealing with BRAC is much the same:

- The city will stop development in the primary accident-potential zones, which the Navy calls APZ-1 zones. The city would not seize or demolish any homes there, but it would buy roughly 40 acres of vacant private land, by eminent domain if necessary.

Virginia Beach, like other cities, already has the power to use eminent domain to take land for public purposes such as new schools, Matthias said. But because the Beach has no redevelopment and housing authority, it needs the General Assembly's permission to take land for an economic purpose such as keeping the jets at Oceana, Virginia Beach's largest employer.

- Virginia Beach will limit development in a corridor between Oceana and an auxiliary field, Fentress, in Chesapeake, where jets frequently fly.
- The city also will limit the density of development in medium-and high-noise zones, including parts of the oceanfront resort strip.

Several council members said they had heard mostly praise for the approach the city has taken with Oceana. Some property owners have argued the city should compensate them for development rights that will be curtailed in order to protect Oceana, and the council has agreed to consider that.

Tribes Show Interest In Targeted Naval Air Station

Associated Press

December 20, 2005

Maine's Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Indian tribes are expressing an interest in the Brunswick Naval Air Station, which is to be redeveloped after it is closed.

BRUNSWICK, Maine (AP) -- The tribes are ruling out such controversial ideas as a casino or a liquefied natural gas terminal at the site, which is being decommissioned as part of the base realignment and closure process. The Navy is scheduled to leave the three-thousand-acre site in 2011.

The two tribes have expressed their interest in letters to the U-S Interior Department.

The Penobscots appear to have a clearer idea of what they'd do with the property, such as manufacturing a wood-based product, doing aviation maintenance and manufacturing airplane parts, or production of renewable energy.

Tim Love, an economic development adviser to the Penobscots, said the tribe intends to form a partnership with an existing business.

The Passamaquoddies aren't yet publicizing any specific business plans.

Don't overdo regulations city warned

By Jessie Stensland

Dec 17 2005

Oak Harbor City Council members decided to continue a moratorium Tuesday night on development within accident potential zones, or APZs, off the end of a Navy base runway. But the controversy may not be over, even though a development plan that was the target of the moratorium has been withdrawn. The city's next step is to draft new development regulations for the APZ area during the four months left of the moratorium.

Property owners and others are already urging the city not to be overly restrictive in the new regulations. On the other side, city staff members have said the zoning could be more restrictive than the Navy recommends for land that falls within APZs.

In fact, Don Boyer suggested a possible lawsuit if the city's development regulations for the APZ do indeed encumber beyond Navy recommendation. He is the trustee for a 17-acre parcel at the corner of Highway 20 and Fakkema Road that falls under the APZ.

"If there is any attempt to down-zone the property," Boyer said in a written statement Thursday, "or to place restrictions on the property that exceed the restrictions by the Navy and the Department of Defense, already agreed to by the owners, then we will decide what action will be taken after conferring with our land-use attorney."

According to paperwork from the city's development services department, there's not much difference between allowable uses in the current C-4 zoning and what the Navy recommends for uses in APZ-2.

Nearly 55 of the 60 acres in question fall under APZ-2, which is the less restrictive zone. About 5.5 acres, owned by Boyer, fall under APZ-1, where there's a greater danger of an aircraft crashing. In addition to Boyer, the moratorium affects Joel Douglas of Harbor Lands, Westgate Mobile Home, as well as the Jaeger and Salazar families.

The biggest difference between permitted land uses in C-4 and what's permitted by the Navy's suggested compatibility for APZ-2 concerns restaurants. The city's regulations allow restaurants but the Navy doesn't.

But City Development Services Director Steve

Powers said revising the city's zoning code won't be as easy as crossing off restaurants as allowed uses. He said the city also needs to look at density limits and go through a process that involves state agencies, the Navy and public hearings.

Powers said the new regulations should be "at least compatible with the APZ code recommendations," or the city "could choose to be more conservative."

The purpose of the public hearing Tuesday was for council members to decide if there are enough reasons, or findings, to justify continuing the moratorium.

City Attorney Phil Bleyhl provided the council members with a long list of findings to support the moratorium. Most notable is the issue of encroachment, or incompatible development around the Navy base. City leaders worry that encroachment could make the base more vulnerable to closure under the Base Realignment and Closure process.

Bleyhl discussed the importance of the Navy to the city's economy. The base provides about 68 percent of the total employment in the county.

Joel Douglas of Coachman Inn spoke also against the moratorium and asked the City Council not to overdo restrictions.

"Take only what you need and no more," he said.

Bush approves budget

December 20, 2005

By: Lauren Bigge

Associated Press

Now that the White House has signed off on the 2006 budget, which includes \$53.5 million in new construction projects for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, the area will be seeing a lot of changes over the next few years.

"I was pleased to learn these projects are now law," Saxton said last week. "This funding is the start of a new mega base that is already a model for the nation. South Jersey will soon be home to the nation's first and only Army-Navy-Air Force installation that also has considerable Marine and Coastal Guard presence."

Saxton referred to the level of funding as "quite significant" during a tour of the construction sites Monday.

Saxton said over the next seven years about \$300 million would be invested.

"This year's (military construction) for the three bases is \$53.5 million; that is a figure that is already in law," he said, adding that this amount is separate from the funding for the military housing project.

"I expect that we'll see ground breaking for these projects by late 2006," he said. "These projects are designed to continue the modernization of all three bases and build upon the jointness we already have. The Fort Dix project will build a mock city to improve training in urban warfare techniques for our soldiers. The McGuire electrical project will continue to upgrade infrastructure for the Air Force, and the Lakehurst project will improve training for the National Guard."

During the next six years, the investments will include \$50 million for McGuire, \$78.4 million for Fort Dix, and \$119 million for Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst.

"We know the bases will retain control of their individual missions," Saxton said. "This combination of three bases, which comprises 42,000 acres and supports active guard and reserve units, will be formulated into a joint base. We will use it as a test bed for other joint bases that are formed around the country."

McGuire will take responsibility for security and Fort Dix will be responsible for maintenance, Saxton said. However, both bases, and possibly Navy Lakehurst, will handle ammunition storage.

He also said that a joint pre-mobilization site will be established at Fort Dix, which will be known as Dix-McGuire-Lakehurst.

Under the Base Realignment and Closure Law, a new Northeast Regional Readiness Command

headquarters will be established at Fort Dix. The headquarters of the 99th Regional Readiness Command at Pittsburgh's U.S. Army Reserve Command in Corapolis, Pa. will be eliminated. The Army Reserve's 78th Division Headquarters will be transferred to Fort Dix from Camp Kilmer in Edison when that base closes. A Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is to be created at Fort Dix, which will replace the headquarters of the 77th Regional Readiness Command at Fort Totten, N.Y. The 244th Aviation Brigade will be relocated to Fort Dix from Fort Sheridan, Ill.

Mobilization assets will come to Fort Dix from Aberdeen, Md., Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C., and New London, Conn. The 228th Aviation Division from Willow Grove Naval Air Station will be relocated to Fort Dix, as will Reserve Intelligence Area 16, which is currently in Trenton.

According to the BRAC law, McGuire will gain some 45 aircraft, as well as the Naval Air Station Joint Readiness base from Willow Grove, Saxton said. The aircraft will come primarily from Willow Grove. Personnel and equipment associated with the Tire and Wheel and Aviation Life Support Systems are set to be relocated from Willow Grove as well. Marine Light Helicopter Attack Squadron 775 Detachment D from Cambria Regional Airport in Johnstown, Pa. will also come to McGuire.

The aircraft due to arrive at McGuire include four C-130 Navy Hercules, eight KC-135R Air Force Stratotankers, 11 light helicopters (a combination of Army Cobras and Hueys), four C-9 Navy Skytrains, five to 10 C-12 Army Hurons and 10 CH-53 Marine Sea Stallions.

"It will involve the retirement of 16 KC-135E aircraft, which are currently flown by the New Jersey National Guard of the 108th," Saxton said.

Overall, Saxton said, "I believe this is great news for the community."

Expanding Military Options

Changes in the Armed Forces Creating Opportunities for Contractors

By Debra Wood

December 20, 2005

A restructuring of the Army and a commitment by the military to improve the living conditions of service people means that construction on bases remains strong.

And recent recommendations of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission on base closings and consolidations should add opportunities.

"The Department of Defense work is steady and, if anything, it will increase with a combination of BRAC repositioning and the new modularity concept of the Army," said Frank Tanahey, design services manager for general contractor B.L. Harbert International of Birmingham, Ala.

Tanahey said that when a base shuts down and personnel are shifted to other locations, the military must build facilities to accommodate the soldiers.

BRAC has recommended closing Army bases Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson, both in Georgia, and the Naval Air Station in Atlanta. Major realignments would take place at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla., and at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina.

President Bush accepted the commission's report in September and sent it to Congress, which has 45 days to review it and approve the recommendations without changes or reject it.

"We see BRAC as providing a further boost to construction," said Steve Turner, acting chief of military programs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District, which covers Georgia and the Carolinas.

Turner said the BRAC recommendations could add \$200 million to \$500 million annually in corps construction projects, which now average between \$400 million to \$500 million per year.

In addition, the Army Modular Force Unit Stationing Transformation Initiatives will add to the corps' work list. The initiative aims to make forces more quickly deployable by creating self-sufficient brigades to replace current divisions.

"The Army is transforming into a different type of fighting force, and to support that we're doing lots and lots of construction," Turner said. He added that the Army will move units from all over the world back to the United States.

Initially the corps will use modular facilities to house and provide support structures for 1,000 to 3,000 soldiers at each receiving base. The modular units ultimately will be replaced with permanent construction.

The Army also plans to add more huge complexes that give soldiers a place to drill with live weapons and tanks.

For the past few years, the Army has focused on improving barracks and updating living facilities. That will wind down during the next five years as the Army concentrates on improving quality of life by building gymnasiums, swimming pools and child-development centers on bases, Turner said.

Housing

"There seem to be opportunities everywhere, and there is a mandate to upgrade barracks and operations facilities," said Terry Willis, marketing director for Caddell Construction Co. of Montgomery, Ala.

At Fort Benning, Ga., Caddell has begun a \$41 million project that includes two barracks structures and headquarters, dining hall and support buildings. Caddell also is busy at Fort Bragg, N.C., constructing a \$68 million 1st Corps Support Command barracks and company operations complex. Both living facilities

provide private rooms for the soldiers attached to a common kitchen and living area.

B.L. Harbert has completed 85 percent of the design-build 16th MP Brigade Complex at Fort Bragg, which includes a four-story residential building and support structures.

The company has begun foundation work on a design-build barracks project at Fort Stewart, Ga. The seven three-story concrete buildings will have metal-stud walls and exterior brick cladding.

The military also has made a large commitment to renovating and revitalizing its family housing program, said Joe Zukowski, lead estimator for military projects for general contractor Dick Corp. of Pittsburgh.

"Military housing is extremely strong," agreed Jim Taylor, executive vice president of Centex Construction of Atlanta, crediting the Department of Defense's housing privatization program.

Centex began work in November 2004 on a multiyear, privatized housing project at Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield for GMH Military Housing of Newtown Square, Pa. When complete, it will consist of 1,770 new town houses and 98 single-family homes and renovation of 1,597 existing units. Centex is gearing up to start a similar project at Fort Gordon, near Augusta, Ga., in 2006, again with GMH, which received a 50-year ground lease to develop and manage family housing at that base.

Other Projects

At Eglin Air Force Base in Valparaiso, Fla., B.L. Harbert is in the third year of a \$33.9 million, 157,222-sq.-ft. hospital renovation project, which includes a 71,878-sq.-ft., reinforced concrete addition to house outpatient facilities.

And the company is in the midst of a \$17 million project, adding administrative and training facilities at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Dick Corp. received a \$79 million design-build contract for a 35,000-sq.-ft. precast concrete Aviation Rescue Swimmer School, a 54,000-sq.-ft. precast fitness center and two masonry visitor quarters totaling 196,000 sq. ft. at the Aviation Enlisted Aircrew Training School in Pensacola, Fla. Construction will begin in 2006, with completion scheduled for one year later.

Danis Construction of Jacksonville, Fla., began work in June 2004 on its first military job - a 100,000-sq.-ft., combined support maintenance shop at the Florida National Guard's Camp Blanding Training Site near Starke, Fla.

The \$21 million project includes six pre-engineered masonry and steel buildings with metal roofs, which will house administrative personnel, vehicle refurbishing, a missile vault, firing range; electronics repair facility and automotive service shop.

Danis also paved 20 acres with a resin-topped asphalt that hardens the concrete so tanks can drive on it. In its final weeks at the training center, Danis received a second contract to build a 60,000-sq.-ft. regional training institute at Camp Blanding.

The \$13 million project entails construction of a single-story, metal-stud frame educational facility and a two-story, concrete-block billeting building.

Hightower Construction Co. of North Charleston, S.C., is building a 60,000-sq.-ft., masonry and structural-steel medical-dental clinic at Parris Island, S.C., for the Navy. The \$21 million project was coming out of the ground with pile caps and grade beams in September and should be complete by the end of 2007.

At the Navy Hospital in Beaufort, S.C., Hightower is gearing up to replace stair towers, a \$1 million project, according to Jack Ellison, Hightower onsite project manager.

Also at Parris Island, Centennial Contractors Enterprises of Vienna, Va., holds a six-year

Marine Corps indefinite delivery indefinite quantity contract for miscellaneous repairs, renovations and upgrades ranging from \$10,000 to \$750,000. It received a similar 10-year contract for repairs and remodeling, ranging from \$200,000 to \$2 million, at Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Fla.

John Martin, senior vice president of Centennial, said contracts are better this year than last, but domestic military spending may be trending down in response to ongoing expenses in Iraq.

Earning the Contract

Major military projects are highly competitive. It usually begins with a qualification process, with interested firms providing detailed information about past performance on similar jobs and references.

Then the military invites a few companies to bid. A faster schedule earns a bid more points from the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, many military jobs require more collaboration with end users.

"There is almost a universal requirement for formal teamwork or partnering," Caddell Construction's Willis said. "There's more of a team effort than there was in an effort to get things right before big mistakes are made."

Design-build is growing in popularity with government contracting. Turner of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said the corps uses design-build for 25 percent to 40 percent of its projects, especially those similar to commercial work, such as barracks and office buildings.

Turner also said the corps is using more commercial standards rather than its unique, long-standing specifications for materials and techniques.

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ADD-ONS TO DEFENSE BILL ILL-SERVES TROOPS AND AMERICA

By Diane M. Grassi
MichNews.com
Dec 21, 2005

The U.S. House of Representatives wrapped up 2005 by adopting a \$453 billion budget for the 2006 Defense Appropriations Act. It is now left up to the U.S. Senate to decide which amendments to include or not include in its authorization of funding, intended primarily for the U.S. military in order for them to pay troops, continue operations in Iraq through March 2006, and for the military to maintain U.S. national security.

But it is hardly clear to Americans why there are all kinds of legal machinations going on in the last minutes of 2005 in the Senate, on a defense bill largely decided prior to Labor Day 2005. And the debate is not about the appropriations for our military but rather about items which have little to do with the armed services.

It has long been a practice on Capitol Hill to tack on amendments for funding legislation or special projects to other funding or budget bills if they do not stand a chance of being passed as stand-alone legislation.

Doing so with “must-have” legislation has been roundly criticized, allegedly forcing members of Congress to approve measures they would ordinarily reject. However, there is a criterion regarding the qualification for such amendments by virtue of Senate Rules.

The application of the Rules themselves has now been piled on top of the bill’s negotiations. Specifically, Senate Rule 28 is at issue, which states that once an Appropriations Conference report has been finalized in negotiations, additional projects may not be attached to such a measure. In addition, that item must be related to the substance of the budget bill being passed.

In this instance, Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), Chairman of the Senates’ Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, has attached the controversial provision to allow oil drilling in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), stating that “Oil is related to national security. The largest consumer of oil in the U.S. is the Department of Defense.” According to many Democrats and some Republicans as well, Senator Stevens’ attempt at “back-door” legislation is disingenuous and holds the needs of American troops in abeyance.

The vote on inclusion of ANWR in the defense bill is to take place on December 21, 2005. The Democrats have threatened a filibuster in order to ultimately block floor votes if there are not enough votes in order strip ANWR from the defense spending legislation. But Senate Rules cannot simply be amended to the liking of one political party or another. It does, however, sidetrack

the issue at hand which is to provide necessary funding for the military, which was to have passed by October 1, 2005. Military paychecks have been guaranteed through December 31, 2005, only due to a stop-gap measure passed in mid-December by the Congress.

Simply because the calendar is running out does not take lawmakers off the hook from rationally voting on legislation. The ANWR issue has been a contentious one ever since the 19 million acres were purchased by the U.S. government in 1980. Environmentalists as well as oil companies are the two largest groups with opposing arguments, but more importantly is potentially how much ANWR will alleviate American dependence on foreign oil. It is estimated that the 1.5 million acres reserved for drilling could ultimately produce 10 billion barrels of oil with production of 900,000 barrels a day by the year 2025; hardly a dent in the needed supply for a country which devours 20.2 million barrels of oil per day in the year 2005.

And while ANWR is grabbing the headlines, the other attachments to defense spending, which the House has already ratified, includes more aid for the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast due to Hurricane Katrina and other storms to the tune of \$29 billion, \$3.9 billion for Avian Flu preparedness with a provision with liability protections for pharmaceutical manufacturers and \$2 billion for low-income heating and energy assistance (LIHEAP) due to heating costs for the winter expected to escalate in price by approximately 30%. And those are only the main items which have been reported, as the bill has been said to be over 1,000 pages.

will be given in offshoring military parts to India and China.

How many of the additional attachments to the Defense Appropriations Act are indeed relative to defense spending, we may never know, nor will many of our lawmakers, who have but skimmed through the bill. The 11th hour is not the time, it could be argued, to start familiarizing oneself with issues on such important legislation. However, what prevented them from doing so, say, on their recesses before Labor Day or the two weeks recess for Thanksgiving?

The good news is that the troops will see a 3.1% rise in salary, identical to the one which Congress passed for itself. Still not yet clear is how far health and pay benefits will be extended for reservists. The breakdown presently passed by the House is \$97 billion for military personnel, \$123.6 billion for operation and maintenance, \$76.5 billion for procurement, \$72.1 billion for research and development, test and evaluation, \$2.1 billion for revolving and management funds, \$22.7 billion for other Department of Defense programs and \$50 billion for emergency wartime appropriations.

With the recent acceptance by the Congress of the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission report and with the 2006 Defense Quadrennial Review due in February 2006 from the Pentagon, it has yet to be determined how much they will influence allocation of the funds from this legislation over the coming year. Still remaining under scrutiny are procurement contracts and how much leeway contractors

Whichever way the ANWR provision is decided upon, however, perhaps it has opened the eyes of the voting public as to how far U.S. lawmakers will go in putting their politics above those fighting a war on foreign soil and their lack of rationale in doing so. This latest defense bill grandstanding is only but one recent example of key legislation being held up not necessarily for the greater good of the U.S., but for individual posturing in an effort to score points within the two political parties.

While no one on Capitol Hill has an axe to grind with providing funding for our military, the funding for troops in the field for necessary equipment replenishment, body and Humvee armor as well as equipment upgrades was promised months and months ago. The behavior of the Congress all year long has not passed muster on many issues regarding the proper funding of our troops. For lawmakers now to use the last days of 2005 to exact attention upon themselves is distasteful at best. They should rather be focusing on appropriations oversight for our troops to ensure that the allocated billions will be properly spent, and that would perhaps curry them more favor from the American people as well.

Influx of defense jobs puts onus on localities

By Robert Salonga

Baltimore Sun

Originally published December 21, 2005

WASHINGTON // It was good news last month when Congress officially approved plans to send thousands of defense jobs to Maryland's two largest military installations, but before the economic boost is toted up, the adjacent communities must find a way to build and pay for infrastructure expansions. Anne Arundel County's Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County are fast-tracking preparations for an estimated total job increase of 7,500, the growth resulting from base closures in surrounding states.

Under the Defense Department's base plan, the changes -- additions of about 5,300 military personnel at Fort Meade and 2,200 at Aberdeen -- must be initiated within two years and completed within six. The first deadline is no problem, but six years is a relative sprint considering what is needed to handle the additional thousands in families, businesses and contractors expected to follow the relocated workers.

The communities anticipated expansion when the latest round of the Base Realignment and Closure process began this year. Both bases were reasonably safe from major losses because Fort Meade is adjacent to the National Security Agency and Aberdeen Proving Ground is a straight drive on the interstate from Washington.

Obtaining funding is the foremost, but least certain, task in the early planning stages. The federal government has the biggest pot of money available for the expansions, so municipalities are aiming their best pitches

there to ensure minimal impact on state and county coffers.

"The demand on the federal dollar is pretty significant," said J. Thomas Sadowski, director of the Harford County Office of Economic Development. "That means we have to show how we're doing things in the most quick and efficient manner."

The state can reasonably expect a good return on whatever costs it ends up shouldering: Fort Meade and NSA, together the largest employer in Maryland, contribute \$4 billion annually to the state economy, and local officials estimate a \$1 billion boost in that figure when the expansion is complete.

APG is estimated to produce nearly \$2 billion annually.

At Fort Meade, Route 175, which runs along the post's eastern border, is a target for expansion. This fall, the state's congressional delegation secured \$12.5 million to widen the road that will become an even more important artery into the growing installation. The estimated \$100 million road project includes noise barriers around the base perimeter.

Also in the area, developers are constructing at least 37 new residential areas with 10 or more housing units. Odenton Town Center, a 1,600-acre site, is a mix of retail and residential developments under way that locals hope will help the area handle an growing number of services for the expected population influx.

On the work force front, community advocates are brainstorming incentives, from schools to jobs, to encourage reluctant workers to move from states such as Virginia and New Jersey. There is talk of establishing a homeland security curriculum

at local middle and high schools along with programs aimed at accommodating spousal employment needs.

Virginia Beach council considers plan to save Oceana jets

December 21, 2005

Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. The city council of Virginia Beach, Virginia, votes tonight on a plan that would keep Navy jets at Oceana Naval Air Station without condemning thousands of homes near the base's runways.

The proposal would ban new development in accident-prone zones. That's the alternative to condemning and buying existing homes and businesses as the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission demanded the city do or risk losing the Navy jets.

The 20-part package being considered by the council also would limit development in other areas subject to jet noise. Loss of the jets may also lead the Navy to drop its disputed plans to build a practice landing field in northeastern North Carolina.

If the council approves the plan, Virginia Beach will ask the General Assembly next month for permission to use eminent domain to condemn about 40 acres of vacant land in the crash zones to prevent development.

(BW) Fitch Assigns Initial 'A' Rating to Yuma Union High SD No. 70, AZ School Bonds

Huston City Times

December 21, 2005

By Business Editors

AUSTIN, Texas--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 20, 2005--Fitch Ratings has assigned an initial 'A' rating to the Yuma Union High School District No. 70 of Yuma County, Arizona's (the district) \$34.375 million school improvement bonds, project of 2005, series A (2006). Additionally, Fitch has assigned the 'A' rating to the district's \$4.4 million outstanding school improvement bonds. The bonds are scheduled to sell the week of Jan. 9, 2006, via a negotiated offering through Peacock, Hislop, Staley & Given. The bonds are direct and general obligations of the district and are payable from an unlimited ad valorem tax levied on all taxable property within the district. Proceeds will be used to construct various district facilities and to pay issuance costs. The Rating Outlook is Stable. The 'A' rating reflects the district's modest debt burden, satisfactory financial position, and expanding tax base. The state, through the 'Students FIRST' capital program, has assumed a more prominent role in financing Arizona school district infrastructure needs. Fitch considers the state's expanded role in financing school facility needs a stabilizing factor which has helped strengthen the district's debt position. The district's financial performance has been typical of Arizona school districts, characterized by small operating margins. Ongoing residential development throughout the district is producing tax base and population gains, and the subsequent enrollment increases are driving facility expansion needs.

Located in southwest Arizona in Yuma County, the district totals nearly 2,500 square miles and contains the communities

of Yuma, San Luis, and Somerton. Enrollment presently totals nearly 10,000, and has been growing at a healthy 5% annually over the past several years. The residential component of the tax base has been increasing as a result of the healthy housing market and now represents 55% of the total market value. Local unemployment rates historically have been well above state and national averages, reflecting the large migrant worker population in the area. The county's October 2005 unemployment rate was 15.7%, compared to the state's 4.9% and the 5.0% national average.

The district's debt burden is expected to remain low, given the substantial capital financing provided by the state. The State Facilities Board (SFB) has approved funding of roughly \$50 million for the construction of two new high schools, one that opened in 2005 and one scheduled to open in fall, 2007. As a supplement to the SFB-funded projects, district voters approved \$70 million in class B bonds in November 2005 to construct performing arts, athletic and vocational educational facilities, as well as renovation and remodeling projects. These bonds are the first installment under this authorization, which is expected to finance facility needs through 2010 or 2011.

Direct debt per capita and as a percentage of market value presently are low at \$231 and 0.8%, respectively. Overall ratios are only moderately higher at \$647 per capita and 2.2% of full cash value. Above average principal repayment is a positive credit factor, with more than 65% retired in ten years. Given that the district's outstanding tax-supported debt is retired in fiscal 2006, officials do not anticipate any significant secondary assessed valuation (SAV) tax rate impact from the current authorization.

The district reported a modest operating loss in fiscal 2004 but is projecting a surplus for the year that ended June 30, 2005. State aid for operations remains the dominant operating revenue source, averaging between 70%-75% of total general fund revenues over the past five fiscal years. The fiscal 2006 budget includes 30 growth-related staff additions, and a salary increase of more than 3%. Annual enrollment growth is expected to continue in the 4%-6% range over the near term, and district officials anticipate growth to continue for the foreseeable future. Development projects reportedly are proliferating due to the increase in the service sector, expansion at local military bases, and the attractiveness of the area in terms of cost of living.

The area economy is anchored by agriculture, the military, light industry, and tourism. Located at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers, Yuma boasts an agricultural sector that generates \$800 million annually. The U.S. Marine Corps Air Station and the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground employ more than 7,000 workers combined and contribute roughly \$600 million to the local economy each year. Neither facility is slated for personnel reductions through the current Base Realignment and Closure process; in fact, district officials report that both bases are expanding. Fitch views the military's significant presence a stabilizing factor, at least for the near term. The favorable winter climate attracts significant numbers of seasonal tourists to the area.

Fitch's rating definitions and the terms of use of such ratings are available on the agency's public site, www.fitchratings.com. Published ratings, criteria and methodologies are available from this site, at all times. Fitch's code of conduct, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, affiliate

firewall, compliance and other relevant policies and procedures are also available from the 'Code of Conduct' section of this site.

**BRAC effort gets \$100K boost
Money from state to bolster recruiting efforts in D.C. area**

Tuesday, December 20, 2005

By Shelby .G Spires

Times Aerospace

Plans to recruit military workers from northern Virginia to the Huntsville area got a major boost Monday from Gov. Bob Riley.

Riley presented a \$100,000 check to local leaders "so that we can get the word out about what a great place North Alabama - the whole state, really - is to live and work," Riley said during a ceremony at Redstone Arsenal.

The money will be used to bolster recruitment efforts planned for next year in the area around Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia - the current home of major Army organizations that soon will move to Redstone thanks to the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC.

Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer said the money is vital to the city's effort to convince people to move here. Local delegations plan several trips in the coming months to "put the word out about what a wonderful place Huntsville and Redstone is to live and work," she said.

Major organizations to be located at Redstone over the next five years include the Missile Defense Agency, Army Materiel Command and Space & Missile Defense Command headquarters.

Shortly after the presentation ceremony, Riley, Spencer, Madison County Commission Chairman Mike Gillespie, Madison Mayor Sandy Kirkindall and other officials met with Redstone's commanding officer, Army Maj. Gen. Jim Pillsbury, about community and Army issues related to completing the BRAC moves.

The moves are expected to bring about 5,000 military, civilian and contractor jobs to the arsenal, and another 10,000 support jobs are projected to follow to North Alabama region.

Gillespie said the job numbers are still changing.

The Pentagon has up to five years to complete the relocations, but the moves are expected to take place before 2010.

Gillespie said the Washington area is the major focus, "but it's not just there."

"Other areas, like Atlanta, have people and jobs slated to come here," he said. "We are discussing where to go, what to do and planning for that now."

Examiner Editorial - Approve the lease, then really play hardball

The Examiner

December 21, 2005

We don't envy the 13 members of the D.C. Council, who will be voting on a 30-year baseball stadium lease. The dilemma they face is real: The city will not issue construction bonds - and Major League Baseball will not sell the Nationals - until the lease is approved.

However, if council members do approve the lease, they also will be agreeing to cover all construction overruns, which have already increased nearly 25 percent since the deal was announced by Mayor Anthony Williams last year. And if they vote it down, they'll be blamed for the sudden departure of a baseball team that's taken city officials three decades to lure back to the nation's capital.

It didn't have to be so hard. In his eagerness to entice baseball back to the city it abandoned, the mayor forgot a cardinal rule of negotiation: If you want it more than the other guy, you've already lost. While MLB officials were still coyly "considering" relocating the floundering Montreal Expos to Puerto Rico, Williams was all but offering to be the Nats' batboy himself if they picked Washington.

But that was the critical time when the mayor should have held something back. He then could have leveraged the euphoria of the Nats' inaugural season to hammer out a much better deal. At the very least, he should have demanded that the new team cover cost overruns beyond the generous \$535 million the D.C. Council agreed to spend - more public money for a professional sports stadium than has ever been spent anywhere in the country. MLB officials would have been fools to turn down such an offer. Even more so now, after the Nats proved they could sell 2.7 million tickets while playing in RFK Stadium.

Council finance committee Chairman Jack Evans, D-Ward 2, has called the lease "the best negotiated deal we could get from Major League Baseball." If that's the case, the city needs to hire some much better negotiators.

Estimates for the 41,000-seat stadium on the Anacostia River are now up to \$667 million. Under last year's agreement, the city is obligated to cover the \$132 million difference. MLB has agreed to throw in a paltry \$20 million more, a somewhat meaningless gesture since baseball will eventually get it all back in the form of extra off-game parking revenue.

Since an earlier council vote limited the amount of stadium bonds that could be issued to \$535 million, the difference has to come from another source. The D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute says that "a review of the current stadium budget reveals that the District does not have sufficient capacity from the capped bond amount and other revenues to pay for stadium costs," even though the city is "taking unusual steps to address the higher costs."

Those "unusual steps" include subtracting necessary infrastructure costs from the final total figure; using \$43 million in contingency funds that might be needed later to clean up the site, and tapping almost half of the District's rainy day fund. This in a city that can't even afford to renovate its dilapidated public schools.

Williams sold the stadium idea to the city as a way of attracting economic development along the long-neglected Anacostia River, which was a mess before the Senators moved away. The fact that the city didn't also automatically hand over development rights in the project's 21-acre footprint points to the one way out of the council's current dilemma.

The new city-financed glass, steel and limestone ballpark will attract millions of fans each year. Those fans in turn will attract numerous commercial enterprises that should be willing to help pay for the infrastructure that will literally bring millions of customers to their doors. At this late date, the council's best option is to approve the stadium lease at the agreed-upon price - and demand that it stay within the budget. It must also make sure - in writing - that the same negotiators who gave away far too much to MLB do not make the same mistake twice.

Opinions/ Editorials

Additional Notes