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07 07 2005



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To the Honorable BRAC Commission:

If Cannon AFB was to be closed, here are some GREAT things that the community to thrive off.

Closing Cannon AFB would not be a bad idea. At least the money saved from Cannon would buy a solider in Iraq a better bullet proof vest or more ammunition, possibly saving his/her life.

Thank You,

Mary Abbott
Concerned Citizen

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**ECONOMIC RENEWAL:
COMMUNITY REUSE OF FORMER MILITARY BASES**

April 21, 1999

We have survived, and most of our citizens agree that we are better off today than prior to closure.

Easy access to transition help: As of late 1997, four key federal agencies had provided more than \$1 billion in assistance to post-1988 base closure communities.²

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Assistance</u>	<u>Communities Helped</u>
Office of Economic Adjustment	\$239M	>100
Department of Labor	\$205M	56
Economic Development Admin.	\$334M	44
Federal Aviation Administration	\$270M	27

² Other federal assistance includes benefits from the military departments to civilian employees of closing bases and Department of Labor funds, awarded to states on a formula basis, that in turn go to affected workers.

To make it easier for communities and workers to access these funds, beginning in 1993, the agencies formed "SWAT teams" and conducted site visits to some of the larger bases soon after closure was announced. The agencies also streamlined their application procedures so that they could award funds more quickly.

Larger economic planning grants: The Clinton Administration has given DoD's Office of Economic Adjustment the resources and support to do its job even better. OEA now begins helping communities sooner and provides larger grants -- about \$1 million over five years for most communities and up to \$5 million for the hardest-hit communities. OEA's support has helped communities reduce the time it takes them to develop a reuse plan from 57 months (for 1988 closures) to only 21 months (for 1995 closures).

Transition coordinators: Less than a week after the President announced his 1993 plan, DoD had named senior military officials to serve as transition coordinators to every major closing base. More than 100 individuals have served as transition coordinators to date, working as ombudsmen to help communities get information and solve problems, and many serve for five or more years. Currently, 55 transition coordinators are in place at closed or closing bases.

Consistent with existing policy, LRAs would be the only eligible recipients for no-cost EDCs; and any economic benefit from the property must be invested in redevelopment of the base or surrounding community.⁴

DoD will seek to make the legislation authorizing this new policy retroactive to April 1999, so as to minimize disruption to pending EDC applications.

⁴ If the LRA or its successor chose not to invest economic benefit from the EDC in development of the base or surrounding community, DoD would recoup an

appropriate portion of either the original value of the property or the revenue generated from use of the property.

BASE REUSE SUCCESS STORIES

Bergstrom Air Force Base, Austin, TX (BRAC 91; closed Sep 93) – "Fly Austin – The Sky's the Limit" is the theme for this month's grand opening of the new Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, located at the former Bergstrom Air Force Base. In 1993, when Bergstrom closed, the economic loss to Austin from the closure was estimated to be more than \$400 million a year. Today, Austin expects to have 16,000 new jobs associated with the airport by 2012 and more than 725,000 square feet of new development drawn to the surrounding area. Two office buildings have already gone up near the base in anticipation of the airport. In the coming weeks, a series of celebrations will kick off the opening of the last major U.S. airport likely to be built this century and the first former military base to become a major commercial airport. Cargo operations actually began in mid-1997. On May 2, the first scheduled passenger flight will land, ushering in a new era of air service for Austin and central Texas. With 25 gates and 260 flights a day, the airport will accommodate six million passengers in its first year alone. By transforming Bergstrom into a \$690 million international airport, the City of Austin estimates it saved \$200 million in land acquisition and runway construction costs. The Federal Aviation Administration contributed more than \$65 million for airport redevelopment and construction. One of the most distinguishable of Bergstrom's old buildings, the 12th Air Force Division headquarters, called "The Donut" due to its unique design, will reopen as a Hilton Hotel in Spring 2000.

Castle Air Force Base, Merced County, CA (BRAC 91; closed Sep 95) – Castle Airport, Aviation and Development Center, as the base is now called, is currently home to 64 tenants and 2,150 civilian employees. Pacific Bell, with 850 employees, opened its new Customer Care Center in 1997. Pacesetter Industries, with 511 employees, is rapidly expanding its modular building manufacturing business in a former hangar. Allco, a truck trailer manufacturer, has 150 employees working in seven different buildings and is growing. The Castle Air Museum, with an outstanding collection of military aircraft, will be associated with a larger, privately developed 60-acre theme park, the U.S. Aviation and Exposition Center. Castle Vista, a 77-acre, 240-unit housing complex built in 1972, is now owned by Western Care Construction Company, which plans to turn the existing units into affordable senior rental housing. An airport operator is under contract, and general aviation activity is expanding. The Federal Bureau of Prisons is constructing an \$80 million facility, which will create 350 new jobs. The state has designated the site a Local Agency Military Base Recovery Area, which will make available a package of incentives for business tenants similar to that of an Enterprise Zone.

Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, IL (BRAC 88; closed Sep 93) – Today there are more than 70 industrial and commercial tenants on the property, occupying more than 1.3 million square feet of space. These businesses have created 1,416 new jobs, surpassing the level of civilian employment at the time of the closure announcement, and they produce more than \$1.2 million in annual revenues. Major new businesses include Textron, a manufacturer of plastic automotive parts, and a microfilm processing and document storage facility. The newly established civilian airport met its tenth-year projections in just two years, and currently handles more than 700 air operations a month. And more than

900 families now occupy former base housing. One related initiative offers an innovative foster care program, a medical clinic, and housing for the elderly. In addition, the former base now provides 135 acres of parks and recreational opportunities.

England Air Force Base (AFB), Alexandria, LA (BRAC 91; closed Dec 92) – The England Industrial Airpark is one of the most successful examples of base reuse in the country. The England Economic and Industrial Development Authority has 55 tenants on the former base employing 1,500 people, more than double the civilian employment at the time of closure. The city of Alexandria relocated its municipal airport to England, and the facility currently handles 80,000 passengers a year. The state has leased the base hospital; Rapides Parish is using the base school; the state university has leased a classroom building; and a private aviation maintenance company, Pride International, L.L.C., is using a hangar and other buildings. With lease and other revenues now totaling more than \$5 million a year, the Airpark is economically self-sufficient. Other major tenants include Central Louisiana Electric Company, England Jet Center, International Computer Services, Louisiana Air National Guard, Program Services, American Eagle Airlines, Atlantic Southeast Airlines and the U.S. Marshal Service. The non-profit California Lutheran Corporation has leased 185 units of base housing on 60 acres to create a retirement community. The State of Louisiana recently announced plans to invest approximately \$8 million to upgrade the golf course and build a regional conference center.

Fort Benjamin Harrison, Lawrence, IN (BRAC 91; closed Sep 96) – Fort Benjamin Harrison is located 13 miles northeast of downtown Indianapolis. The State of Indiana has purchased the 238-acre, 18-hole golf course and acquired approximately 1,462 acres of pristine forest land and wildlife habitat for use as a state park through a public benefit conveyance. The Fort Harrison Reuse Authority acquired the 550-acre former Main Post area via an Economic Development Conveyance. Subsequently, the city designated the site as an Enterprise Zone, allowing for certain tax exemptions to attract new businesses. To date more than 163 acres have been resold to developers and 735 jobs created; a 107-acre tract will accommodate new commercial, industrial and residential development. Total property sales have exceeded \$8.5 million, with purchasers agreeing to upwards of \$1.4 million in building renovations. Construction is complete on a new 19,000 square-foot medical office building, and the City of Lawrence has begun construction on a new government center that will house all city and township offices.

Fort Devens, Ayer, MA (BRAC 91; closed Mar 96) – More than 1,470 new jobs have been created at Devens. In 1996, the State of Massachusetts purchased 3,040 acres, including all utility systems, for \$17.9 million through an Economic Development Conveyance. In the three years since conveyance, more than 100 acres have been sold and about one million square feet of new construction has occurred. Occupants range from small companies that form a business incubator to the Gillette Corporation. In addition, about 200,000 square feet of existing buildings have been leased. Devens also has signed purchase and sale agreements with three other developers, which will result in about 600,000 square feet of new development in the next few years. Gillette occupies an \$18 million warehouse and distribution center on 26 acres and a \$50 million manufacturing plant on an adjacent 22-acre site. The Boston & Maine Railroad leases property for a railhead and intermodal transportation facility. The Bureau of Prisons has acquired 245

acres for a regional prison medical facility. And the Department of the Interior has acquired approximately 890 acres of land for inclusion in the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

Fort Ord, Monterey County, CA (BRAC 91; closed Sep 94) – More than 1,100 new jobs have been created at the former Fort Ord -- 40 percent of the civilian jobs lost. Education activities have led the economic recovery: California State University created a new campus, Monterey Bay, at the former base and invested more than \$70 million; Cal State Monterey Bay employs 637 people and serves more than 1,200 students. Other educational institutions have acquired property at Fort Ord, including a University of California Science and Technology Center, Monterey Peninsula Unified Schools District, Golden Gate University, Monterey College of Law, and Monterey Institute for Research and Astronomy. The Marina Airport, formerly Fritzsche Army Airfield, hosts several private firms and boasts the creation of more than 200 new jobs. In addition, the former base hospital has been converted to a Defense Finance Accounting Center that employs 109 people. Finally, the Bureau of Land Management is preserving more than 7,000 acres that are home to several threatened or endangered animals.

520 people, a private printing company created 70 jobs, and the county has 40 employees on site. In recognition of its success, the National Association of Installation Developers named Gentile "Installation of the Year" in 1998.

Griffiss Air Force Base, Rome, NY (BRAC 93; closed Sep 95) – More than 1,175 new jobs have been created at the former Griffiss Air Force Base since 1995 -- an employment base that is both diverse and expanding. A Defense Finance and Accounting Service center has 393 employees. Orion Bus Industries leases space to modify buses to comply with environmental emissions regulations. Orion and the General Electric Capital Test Equipment Management Service Company together employ 122 people. Baker Electromotive, a manufacturer of electric and alternative fuel vehicles, will soon lease 50,000 square feet of space and create 100 new jobs. Located in Oneida County, the base is home to the renowned Rome Laboratories and the New York State Technology Enterprise Corporation, which finances and invests in technology transfer within the region. The county has acquired half of the site, approximately 1,500 acres, via an Economic Development Conveyance and plans to consolidate and expand its airport operations at the former air facility. Griffiss will play host to Woodstock 1999, a music extravaganza expected to bring more than 250,000 visitors to upstate New York in July.

Katy Podagrosi,
former mayor of Rantoul, Illinois,
where Chanute Air Force Base was closed in 1993

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BRAC Turned Out to Be Good News For Texas Capital

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA
American Forces Press Service

AUSTIN, Texas, March 14, 2005 – Though the fear of losing jobs and revenue grips nearby cities and towns when the Defense Department decides to close a military installation, the bad news can be made good.

Such was the case when Bergstrom Air Force Base here closed in 1993, its fate sealed by the 1991 Base Realignment and Closure process.

Jim Halbrook, public information officer with Austin's department of aviation, was part of a transition team looking into how to make the Air Force base a viable asset for the city. The view then, he said, was "instead of this being bad news, lets make this an opportunity."

"To use a cliché," he said, "how can we turn lemons into lemonade?"

Bergstrom was home to two Air Force Reserve units, the 924th Fighter Wing and Headquarters 10th Air Force. It also was home base for the 67th Reconnaissance Wing of what was then the Air Force's Tactical Air Command.

The 924th would remain at the airfield, but 10th Air Force moved to Naval Air Station Fort Worth. The 67th emerged from the closure as the 67th Intelligence Wing at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas.

According to DoD projections in 1993, expenditures at Bergstrom were about \$17.8 million a year, and closing the base would cut costs by as much as \$75.2 million between 1996 and 2001.

"The initial reaction was 'Oh no, our local Air Force base is closing,'" said Halbrook. However, shortly after the base was put on the list for closure, he said, the city became "proactive."

"Everybody got behind it really quick," he said. "There was a lot of community support for it, and then the city went out to Austin and the surrounding community with an educational process to sell the community on its plan."

Shortly thereafter, the community approved, by 63 percent, \$400 million in revenue bonds to convert Bergstrom Air Force Base to Austin's new airport facility.

As it turned out, Bergstrom's closure was a positive for Austin, he said.

The community at first lobbied to keep the base open, citing among its many arguments that closing the base would result in loss of jobs and an economic impact of more than \$339 million yearly. And, in fact, when Bergstrom closed in September 1993, it resulted in the loss of 3,940 military and 927 civilian positions.

Though the 924th Fighter Wing did remain, it later was deactivated as part of the 1995 BRAC process, bringing a final end to military presence at the air base.

"Every community is, of course, different and affected differently," Halbrook said. "But in our case, we actually benefited from the closing."

The growing city was in need of a new airport to replace the aging Robert Mueller municipal airport that had served the city since the 1930s, he said, adding that when Bergstrom was listed as a possible BRAC closure, the city "immediately started looking at the airfield as a possible avenue for expansion."

"The timing was good for us, in turning what would have been bad news into an

opportunity,” he said. “We were searching for a new airport site, and it helped that the Defense Department worked with us to make it happen.

“It didn’t happen overnight; it was a long process to get it built, but it has been a success story as far as redevelopment of a base, as far as a base closure and the potential it can have for opportunity,” he said.

The Bergstrom-Austin International Airport, as it was named after its conversion, opened for service in 1999, and now has 25 gates and serves 7.2 million passengers each year. Halbrook said the successful conversion is one of the success stories in how BRAC can benefit a community. He said the airport has created thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in revenue.

According to Halbrook, state and local taxpayers saved an estimated \$200 million in land acquisition and runway construction costs alone by transforming the former Air Force base into the \$690 million international airport.

The airport’s contribution to the city is around \$1.8 billion a year, Halbrook said. “So it was taking something that would have been missed and capitalizing when the timing was right,” he said. The airport created roughly 35,700 jobs, in addition to 21,500 “visitor-related” jobs in the local area.

The airport’s success already has planners looking toward the future.

When yearly passenger totals reach 8 million, Halbrook said, the airport plans to add as many as 10 extra gates. If the total surpasses 10 million passengers, “We will have to look at building a new terminal,” he added.

Although the airport’s success has been astounding, Halbrook said the impact of Bergstrom Air Force Base still is missed. “Any time you lose \$339 million — that’s significant,” he said. “There is a lot of pride with having a military base within a community; people take pride in that.”

Fortunately for the city, he said, the loss was not as devastating on the local community because the city had other viable economic interests.

Austin is Texas’s capital city and the hub of the state’s government. The city also is home to technology giants Dell Computers and Texas Instruments. The University of Texas and defense contractor Computer Science Corporation also are located there.

Nevertheless, to lessen any economic loss to the city, Halbrook said, planners left nothing to waste on its Bergstrom reuse plan.

~~With the plans for a new airport under way, about half the land from the old Robert Mueller airport was sold off to private entities to build a new housing development.~~

The rest of Robert Mueller became the base for the city’s new film industry. “Some of the work for the movie ‘Spy Kids’ was shot inside one of the hangars at the old airport,” he said.

At the former Bergstrom Air Force Base along Spirit of Texas Avenue, the city kept many of the old buildings to be used again -- the airport’s aviation department is one of many offices housed in several of them. Other base structures, including hundreds of military family housing units, were auctioned to private buyers and moved off the base.

Halbrook said the city also was saved from building new runways by keeping those already in place. The base’s runways were capable of handling heavy aircraft, like B-52 bombers. “That’s an asset for a city that wants to become an international airport to land really large planes on,” he said.

Paved roadways were reused, the materials from some of them crushed to make roadbeds for new roads at the airport. The air base's large fuel tanks also were kept for reuse. "We just relocated them to the site where our fuel depot was located," he said.

Aside from the few remaining buildings and hangars left over from the conversion, the only signs of the base's past at this modern facility are located at the pre-checkpoint side of the terminal, where a small museum is located that tells the 52-year history of the Air Force base.

And the Defense Department has found its way back on the air base grounds it once owned.

Two Army National Guard units have taken up residence at the south entrance of one of the airport's runways. Their presence, Halbrook said, is only more good news for Bergstrom International Airport and the city of Austin.

"Who do you call when there is an emergency or a disaster? Who do you call to fill sandbags when there is a flood and storms?" Halbrook asked. "It's a good thing that they are here, not only for the airport and local community, but for all of central Texas as well."