



Environmental Cleanup Program

NEWSLETTER

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Public participation program

Opportunities to participate in the environmental program at Fort McClellan are available throughout the cleanup and closure process. As actions are planned, they will be announced in local newspapers and other media. Public meetings about scheduled activities will be held, and Restoration Advisory Board meetings are always open to the public. The RAB meets the third Monday evening of every month. For more information about these meetings, call (256) 848-7456.

Fact sheets and newsletters like this one will be produced periodically and also are available for review on the Internet web site: www.mcclellan.army.mil. If you are not currently on a mailing list to receive information like this newsletter and would like to be added, contact anyone listed below.

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This newsletter is published periodically to inform community members about the cleanup and closure of Fort McClellan, Alabama. Cleanup of sites throughout the post is being conducted under the regulatory process called the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (also known as Superfund). In September 1999 the mission of Fort McClellan ended with the post being closed under Public Law 101-510, Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1995.

Sacred Heart School happy in its new home

"Beautiful," is how Robin Woolsey, principal of Sacred Heart Catholic School, describes the school's new facilities at the former Fort McClellan Elementary School.

When Sacred Heart was located in suburban Anniston, the school was situated on a hilltop with 11 acres of property and nowhere to grow. Since moving to its new location, school officials see a very bright future ahead. With 23 acres and a 56,000-square-foot facility, Sacred Heart has added a pre-kindergarten for four-year olds and a ninth grade. Plans call for adding 10th and 11th grades for the 2001 school year, and ultimately, a 12th grade. Rev. Richard Donohoe, pastor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church and School, said the goal is to have pre-kindergarten through high school. "Currently, we're drawing students from a 35-mile radius," Donohoe said, "and have added 40 students this year. The new facility will allow more growth potential."

The size and relative newness of the property attracted the interest of the teachers and administration of Sacred Heart, as did the prominent location



The former Fort McClellan Elementary School was in the first property transferred to the Joint Powers Authority under the no-cost economic development conveyance.

and visibility of the facility. When the lease was signed and the move started, Woolsey said the Army had left all the furniture, desks and textbooks from the former elementary school. Woolsey noted that, when combined with Sacred Heart's own equipment, there was so much equipment, it was hard to fit everything into the classrooms.

"The library is my favorite part," said Woolsey. "It is a beautiful, modern space in the new section of the facility. Overall, I think the students are happy, the parents are happy and the teachers love it as well," she added.

Acquiring the property also was a positive experience. In October 1999, Donohoe,

Woolsey and a group of teachers and parents took a tour of the school property. The facility impressed everyone, but there were doubts the property could be obtained. As more was learned about the process for obtaining the school, Donohoe became more enthusiastic about the effort. Once the Diocese was on board and the process started, those working with the Army and the JPA said it was an excellent experience.

"The Army wanted a win-win situation, and the JPA had the foresight to keep the process on track," said Donohoe. He said all the parties were very excited about the possibility of the transfer and *please see SCHOOL, Page 4*

No-cost transfer is a real boost for local communities

A new policy for transferring property faster and at no cost to the community is proving itself at Fort McClellan.

Signed into law in October 1999, the no-cost economic development conveyance (EDC) is designed to speed up the process that transfers closed military installations to the local communities. In doing so, the no-cost EDC lives up to its name; the property can now be transferred at no cost.

"I am convinced that this legislation marks a watershed event in the base-conversion process," said Randall Yim, deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Defense. "It ushers in a new era of collaboration between the [military] services and local communities toward the shared goal of sustainable economic development and job creation. I look forward to 'looking back' in 10 or 20 years . . . and pointing to the number and variety of mature investments that created new economic engines in our local communities—all stemming from the wise use of the new tools provided under this legislation."

Yim added that the guid-



Auburn University signed a 99-year lease for the former Polygraph Institute where dogs will be trained for law enforcement.

ance reflects a careful consideration of the many comments received from local communities, the military services, and other federal agencies and interested parties.

Comparison of the original and new EDCs

In 1993, the federal government created the original EDC to ease the burden caused by base closures on local communities. EDCs were transfers of military base closure property to non-federal entities, such as local redevelopment authorities, for a price below the market value of the property. The purpose was to help communities bring in businesses and create jobs to offset any economic hardships from installation closings.

This law required the local redevelopment authority (LRA) to prepare a business plan for using the property and reinvest any proceeds back into the property for a period of 10 years. The catch was: the LRA had to buy the property from the government. Purchasing the property meant an appraisal was performed to establish a value of all grounds, structures and infrastructure. Once that was completed, negotiations with the Army would

begin.

With the no-cost EDC, LRAs still must provide a business plan for the property and follow application, approval and reporting procedures. The no-cost EDC removes, however, the appraisal and negotiation burdens and reduces the reinvestment period to seven years.

The new legislation was designed to address directly the two major hurdles base closure communities currently face while attempting to reuse closed or realigned bases. First, delays in obtaining control or possession of former base assets delayed planning, rehabilitation, modernization, infrastructure improvements, marketing efforts and job creation. Second, the costs of basic infrastructure work at a former base necessary to allow these assets to compete successfully for new economic activity typically is extremely high. Infrastructure work includes systems such as water and sewer lines, heating and cooling plants and communications systems.

The no-cost EDC provides an opportunity for a collaborative relationship by assisting communities with creating new jobs on the former instal-

lation and relieving the Army of needless caretaker expenses.

Any proceeds from a sale or lease of the EDC property received by the LRA during the first seven years must be used to support long-term job creation and the economic redevelopment of the installation. Allowable uses of proceeds include the following categories:

- Road construction
- Transportation management facilities
- Storm and sanitary sewer construction
- Police, fire-protection and other public facilities
- Utility construction
- Building rehabilitation
- Historic property preservation
- Pollution prevention equipment or facilities
- Demolition
- Disposal of hazardous materials generated by demolition
- Landscaping, grading, and other site or public improvements
- Planning for or the marketing of the redevelopment and reuse of the installation

Other activities on the installation that are related to those listed above also would be considered an appropriate, allowable use of proceeds. Examples of these activities would include: new construction related to job creation and economic redevelopment, capital improvements and operation and maintenance of the facility needed to market the redevelopment and reuse of the installation.

How the EDC is working at Fort McClellan

Fort McClellan, closed in September 1999, has success-

Abbreviations used in this newsletter

BRAC

base realignment and closure

EDC

economic development conveyance

JPA

Joint Powers Authority

LRA

local redevelopment authority

RAB

Restoration Advisory Board

fully put the no-cost EDC to its first test with the transfer of 1200 acres (see articles: Sacred Heart School and Signing ceremonies).

According to Gary Harvey, base transition coordinator, this transfer could have taken another year to complete under the old EDC. "The appraisal and negotiation process can add one year to 18 months to the transfer process," he said.

According to the chair of the McClellan LRA, that extra time spent under the original EDC also meant the Army and the LRA spent a lot of money. Roy Hanner, chair of the board of directors for the Anniston/Calhoun County/Fort McClellan Development Joint Powers Authority (the LRA for McClellan), believes that "at most bases, communities have saved millions of dollars because of the no-cost EDC."

Under the original EDC, costs entered the picture when the negotiations began. The Army placed a value on a piece of property, whether it was a building or an acre of land. The LRA then had to negotiate the price, based on the value the property had to the LRA. It was much like buying a house or a car, except that in the case of Fort McClellan, there were 18,000 acres and 2,000 buildings that would had to have been negotiated. Where the Army saw a value, the LRA may not have. In many cases the buildings are old, do not meet current codes or are designed for specific uses.

"Many of these buildings were built for one purpose—military use—and not for civilian use," Harvey said. "How many businesses need a 60- to 70-vehicle motor pool or a boiler room or an armory?"

What about the environmental cleanup?

The no-cost EDC does not remove the requirement for environmental investigations or, where needed, for cleanup of the property before transfer. Hanner said the working relationship the Army, the environmental contractor and the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) environmental coordinator have is a very close one. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also play key roles in determining when and if property is safe to transfer.

"The community is very pleased with the good relationship that exists," Hanner said. "All of the parties involved are working together to set cleanup priorities in order to turn the property over to the LRA quickly."

For more information about the LRA, contact Kenneth Whitley, executive director of the Joint Powers Authority. He can be reached at (256) 236-2011. For information about the environmental status of sites or the environmental program at McClellan, contact Ron Levy, BRAC environmental coordinator, at (256) 848-3539 or by e-mail: ron.levy@mccllellan.army.mil.

Internet addresses where you may learn more about economic development conveyances can be found at: www.afbca.hq.af.mil/handbook/basis/guidance/brim/7edc.htm or www.afbca.hq.af.mil/factshts/edc.htm or www.cued.org/reach/military/EDCs.html.

Signing ceremonies

On December 12, 2000, the first property consisting of 1200 acres was transferred from the Army to the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) under the economic development conveyance (EDC). The transferred property includes 416 buildings, 324 housing units, 20 miles of roads and approximately 24,000 items of personal property.

At a dual signing ceremony, a memorandum of agreement between the Army and the JPA laid out the procedure for the transfer under the EDC of all property in the future. Immediately following that ceremony, the JPA and Auburn University signed a 99-year lease for the former Polygraph Institute where Auburn will train dogs for bomb and drug detection.

A reception followed the signing ceremony. 🌳



Front row, far left: Roy Hanner, chairman of the Joint Powers Authority for Anniston and Calhoun County, signs the memorandum of agreement transferring 1,200 acres and associated roads and buildings of the former Fort McClellan from the Army to the JPA. Also signing the agreement were James Warr with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Martha Brock, from Region 4 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Ray Clark, with the Army's installations and environment office. Looking on are U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions and U.S. Rep. Bob Riley of Alabama's 3rd congressional district.



Following the first Fort McClellan property transfer to the JPA, Hanner (seated second from left) and Dr. Michael Moriarty, vice president and provost for research at Auburn University, sign documents transferring the former Polygraph Institute to Auburn. Looking on are (seated left and right): Kenneth Whitley, JPA executive director, and retired Army Gen. Gerald Watson, former Fort McClellan commander. Standing left to right: Clark, Tim Moore and Dr. Syd Spain, both of Auburn.

Information repositories

Technical documents and other publications about the cleanup and closure of Fort McClellan are available at the locations listed.

Anniston Public Library

Reference Section
108 East 10th Street
Anniston, Alabama
Phone: (256) 237-8501

Houston Cole Library*

Jacksonville State University
700 Pelham Road, 9th Floor
Jacksonville, AL 36265
Phone: (256) 782-5252

Environmental Office

U.S. Army Garrison/
Transition Force
291 Jimmy Parks Blvd.
Fort McClellan, AL 36205
Phone: (256) 848-7456

You also may visit our website at:

www.mcclellan.army.mil

*The Administrative Record is located here.

Environmental Office
291 Jimmy Parks Blvd.
Fort McClellan, AL 36205

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wanted it to work.

In particular, Donohoe said he had high regard for the helpfulness of Col. David Treuting, garrison commander during the first year of the transfer process. He said Treuting and the JPA were extremely amenable and worked toward the best possible scenario for everyone involved.

The JPA and Sacred Heart signed a five-year lease in May 2000, and the school moved into the facility by June. Under the terms of the lease, the JPA will deed over the school and associated property to Sacred Heart after the church makes its final payment.

When asked about the overall experience, Donohoe said that Sacred Heart was the first



Second-grade teacher Wendy Turner (second from left) reviews materials with Sacred Heart students Abby Clark, Allan Carson, Owen Falkner, Cain Decker, Lucas Carter and Katy Payne.

private property transfer and was a learning process for all involved. He added that the success of the process they went through should benefit all parties that follow, and he said

it would serve as a keystone for all other transfers. Donohoe added, "I couldn't be happier with the process and the outcome." 🌱

