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502nd Air Base Wing new headquarters open for business

By Steve Elliott
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Just 387 days after first breaking ground, the 502nd Air Base Wing officially opened the doors of its new 25,000-square-foot headquarters building located within the Fort Sam Houston National Historic Landmark District Aug. 5.

“It’s amazing what has happened in the last year since I helped turn that first shovel of earth,” said Dr. C.E.M. Maxwell, deputy director, San Antonio Joint Program Office at Randolph Air Force Base. “Here in San Antonio, we have come to expect a pace of change that is just outstanding.”

Funded by the U.S. Air Force as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure law, the new two-story facility cost approximately \$9.7 million and is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver certified.

“This impressive building is actually on the site of the Fort Sam Houston Thrift Shop, the place where people came to find valuable bargains,” Maxwell noted.

“In the coming times of austere defense budgets, I hope the 502nd ABW headquarters will become the home of savings for Joint Base San Antonio.”

Construction on the building was performed by Leetex Construction LLC, in partnership with Hill & Wilkinson Ltd., with GSBS Architects out of Salt Lake City as part of the team supporting the prime contractor.

“For those who were here last year for the groundbreaking, I think you’ll see that the finished project is everything you could have imagined and more,” said. Brig. Gen. Theresa C. Carter, 502nd ABW commander. “It is LEED silver certified, which means it is designed and built with the highest standards for environmental and energy performance.

“This is just one step on our journey to make Joint Base San Antonio a model for energy performance throughout the Department of Defense.”

According to the LEED certification, 20 percent of the construction materials used contains recycled content and 76 percent of the materials were diverted from landfills and recycled.

“While we celebrate the new today with the opening of this building, we also cherish and respect the past,” Carter added. “We honor the rich traditions that are woven throughout historic installations like Fort Sam Houston, and Randolph and Lackland Air Force Bases.

“This building we are celebrating today, the people who serve in it, and the people we serve from it, embody all that is great about this country, as well as the men and women, both in and out of uniform, who volunteer to defend it each day,” the general said.

The 502nd Air Base Wing consists of three major support elements. The Air Force elements are the 802nd Mission Support Group at Lackland and the 902nd MSG at Randolph AFB, while Fort Sam Houston has the 502nd MSG.