



Issue: June 2, 2011

BRAC construction program nearing completion deadline

By Brian Dwyer
Joint Program Management Office

After four years of intense construction activity at Fort Sam Houston, there are now less than four months left before the deadline at the end of fiscal year 2011.

The San Antonio Base Realignment and Closure construction program was launched across local installations in 2007 with roughly \$2 billion in projects and more than 6 million square feet of facilities to build or renovate by the end of fiscal year 2011.

Now, only a few of the originally planned 75 facilities remain to be finished before the statutory BRAC completion deadline of Sept. 15, ending one of the most intense periods of military construction in San Antonio's history.



The most prominent San Antonio BRAC projects still to be completed are located on Fort Sam Houston.

The project to expand and renovate Brooke Army Medical Center, which will become the San Antonio Military Medical Center, is maintaining a schedule that would allow it to meet its BRAC completion requirements.

The hospital's new 5,000-space parking structure began operating at the end of March, while work continues at a rapid pace on the seven-story tower addition and interior renovations to the hospital.

As of the end of April, more than 5-million work-hours had been performed on the SAMMC project without a lost-time accident.

The prolific rate of construction progress is evident from the fact that just six months earlier, in November 2010, the project marked 3-million work-hours performed without a lost-time accident.

On the other side of the post, construction is also moving quickly on the campus of facilities being developed to accommodate the relocation of Headquarters, Installation Management Command from the Washington, D.C. area.

The new 168,000-square-foot IMCOM headquarters building is on track to begin receiving staff members by the end of June. This headquarters building is located in the middle of three historic structures that are being renovated to provide additional space for IMCOM.



One of the buildings is presently occupied, while the other two should be ready for occupancy in August.

Across the street from IMCOM headquarters, a new instructional facility for the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command, a subcommand of IMCOM, is expected to be ready for tenants by the first part of July.

Nearby, the historic Fort Sam Houston Theater is also being renovated to become part of the IMCOM campus. It will provide a new home for the FMWRC's Army Entertainment Division, which produces the traveling U.S. Army Soldier Show.

The refurbished theater is scheduled to be completed in September. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the entire IMCOM campus of facilities is slated for Aug. 19.

Not far away, a new headquarters building for the 502nd Air Base Wing is targeted for occupancy in July.

Under the new organizational structure of Joint Base San Antonio, the 502nd has merged the installation support functions of Fort Sam Houston, Lackland and Randolph Air Force Bases.

Elsewhere on post, almost all of the 14 facilities that compose the Medical Education and Training Campus are in use, as more training courses continue to be integrated into campus operations.



The facilities being utilized include five Medical Instructional Facilities, three dormitories, a dining facility, and the headquarters/administration building. The METC physical fitness center was made ready for use at the end of April and Navy personnel began utilizing the upgraded aquatic center at the beginning of May.

METC has consolidated the enlisted medical training programs of all branches of the military, providing instruction for a variety of medical specialists, such as combat medics,

Navy corpsmen, radiology technicians, and biomedical equipment technologists.

The Joint Center of Excellence for Battlefield Health and Trauma Research formally opened earlier this year next to BAMC. This facility was built to combine the research programs of all service branches that are aimed at enhancing combat casualty care.

To the north, certain missions have begun moving into the 181,000 square foot Tri-Service Research Laboratory, even as finishing touches are being completed on portions of the facility.

The lab is expected to be fully operational by mid-summer. It will house research programs that address the health and safety effects of exposure to a variety of stressors in the field.

While BRAC has accounted for the bulk of construction activity during the past four years, a substantial number of Military Construction and Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (SRM) projects have also been taking place at local installations during the same time period.

Combined with BRAC jobs, these additional projects have brought the total amount of construction work occurring between fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2011 to roughly \$3.3 billion in projects that represent approximately 10.8 million square feet of facilities.

Packing \$2 billion of BRAC projects into four years created an enormous surge in construction activity at local installations. Before BRAC, the annual average for military construction expenditures in San Antonio historically was between \$65 and \$100 million.

Even though BRAC construction concludes in September, military construction in San Antonio will not fade away anytime soon.

As much as \$200 to \$300 million in project work has been proposed at local installations for each year from fiscal year 2012 through fiscal year 2015.

While these figures don't approach BRAC amounts, they stand to keep the military's investment in local installations at historically high levels



“The project team is incorporating a variety of sustainable design elements including extensive use of local regional, certified wood, and recycled building materials,” said H.D. Eisenhower, chief of engineering for the 502nd ABW. “The facility also incorporates sustainable landscape measures, advanced building commissioning, a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation, a solar water heating system, and reducing the heat island effect with roofing and paving materials.”

“This is something we can take great pride in,” said Dr. Cem Maxwell, deputy director, San Antonio Joint Program Office at Randolph AFB.

“This may be a new building,” Maxwell said, “But it will perform an age-old mission of sustaining our military and sustaining our national defense.”

Construction on the building is being 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.

“This project was Air Force BRAC funded and Air Force led, but it would never have been possible without significant support and cooperation from our Army teammates,” Eisenhower said.

“The cooperation of this project is a reflection of the joint basing effort in San Antonio and the collaborative and supportive process it has been,” he added. “This includes Fort Sam Houston’s Department of Public Works’ cultural resources staff, who has helped us ensure the building will adequately respect the historic nature of its site and adjacent historic districts and architecture, in both materials and architectural forms.”

“Additionally, the Army Corps of Engineers team, and the San Antonio Joint Program Management Office, have been key members and involved in this project as well,” Eisenhower said. “The success of this project is really a credit to a great team.”

“Construction like this means a lot to our military and to the city of San Antonio,” Maxwell reiterated. “This is one part of the \$8.3 billion impact that BRAC has had on San Antonio.”