

emBRACe campaign highlights connections, opportunities

Story and photos by L.A. Shively
Fort Sam Houston Public Affairs

The City of San Antonio launched its multimedia campaign “Embrace BRAC San Antonio” at Fort Sam Houston’s historic Quadrangle, July 17.

The campaign aims to create greater local awareness about

opportunities the multi-billion dollar project brings to the community and includes events, billboards, public service announcements and a Web site, www.embracebrac.org. Welcome kits with information including DVDs are also available for new Families.

Approximately 200 military representatives, community leaders and

elected officials attended the opening ceremony. Haley Scarnato, a finalist on “American Idol,” sang a moving version of the “National Anthem” a cappella followed by speakers and unveiling the logo and campaign.

U.S. Army Garrison Commander

See BRAC P11



During her presentation, U.S. Army Garrison Commander Col. Mary Garr highlights connections between the military, San Antonio and the surrounding community that the historic nature of the Quadrangle and Fort Sam Houston symbolize.

BRAC from P1

Col. Mary Garr highlighted connections between the military and San Antonio that the Quadrangle and FSH symbolize, describing the 164-year history between the Army and the San Antonio community. She explained that prior to the Quadrangle's completion in 1879 the Army used a variety of buildings and places in and around the city to manage and house its officers, troops, ammunition and supplies.

"The citizens of San Antonio and the civic and business communities played an important role in convincing Gen. Phil Sheridan to keep the Army in San Antonio after the Civil War," she said.

The Army stayed in San Antonio and continued to look for a permanent location. City fathers donated an area east of the city in 1870 and the Quadrangle was the first building completed at the "Post of San Antonio," renamed Fort Sam Houston in 1890.

"By 1887, San Antonio began expanding trolley lines to this area, local citizens called 'Rattlesnake Hill," Garr said. "Neighborhoods were established near the post since it was easier to commute. With the proximity of the Army, this area became known as Government Hill" and still exists today with a strong neighborhood association."

Garr said expansion will provide lasting benefits to the community.

"BRAC stands for Base Realignment and Closure. But because this realignment will have such a positive impact on San Antonio, we think the BRAC acronym could also stand for Building Relationships Around Community," said District 2 City Councilwoman Ivy Taylor.

Taylor stressed the economic growth due to the influx of business into San Antonio.

"Large and small companies alike will have a chance to grow their businesses. That is why we need the people in the community to keep up



Photo by Donald Manuszewski
Master Sgt. Noe Garcia, U.S. Army North, shakes "American Idol" finalist Haley Scarnato's hand during the city of San Antonio's launch of the "Embrace BRAC San Antonio" campaign at Fort Sam Houston's Quadrangle. Scarnato opened the ceremony with a rendition of the "National Anthem."

with the progress. The public relations campaign is designed to keep people up-to-date with that information."

She said there had been quite a lot of pre-planning and that planning continues.

"We also have the Fort Sam Houston Community Development Office where we have provided funding for staff who will be out in the community."

"We were ranked number one in the nation in terms of the strength

of our economy during this very difficult time and the reason we were is because of a very strong public-private effort here," said Bexar County Judge Nelson

Wolff, adding BRAC is the biggest economic development project in the history of San Antonio.

"Soldiers and their Families will be coming into a military communi-



District 2 City Councilwoman Ivy Taylor stands next to the "Embrace BRAC San Antonio" logo unveiled at Fort Sam Houston's historic Quadrangle. She was a featured speaker at the presentation.

ty which is thrilled to have them," Garr said, "and a civilian community surrounding Fort Sam that is absolutely thrilled to have them."