

Defense

advocate

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BRAC - One year out

On September 15, 2005, President George Bush sent a letter to Tony Principi, chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission, accepting the commission's final recommendations and thanking the members for their service. That was five years and billions of dollars ago, and now the sweeping 2005 decisions have only a year left to be implemented.

More than 130 separate BRAC actions were approved for Virginia, about 16 percent of the total and the most of any state. Some were difficult to swallow at first, but in the end the Commonwealth will enjoy a net increase of 5,350 Defense Department employees and more than \$6 billion in federal capital investment.

The big gains are found in what the DoD's Office of Economic Adjustment has designated as "growth communities". Marine Corps Base Quantico will soon house a joint facility of all Military Department Investigative Agencies with about 2,750 employees. Fort Lee will essentially double in square footage and personnel, adding 7,400 workers and more than \$1.4 billion in construction. And Fort Belvoir is undergoing an incredible transformation, adding about 20,000 personnel and more than \$3.7 billion in investment spread over four sites from Charlottesville to Alexandria.

As important as the gains in Virginia are, the bigger story may be what was spared, the two biggest of which are Naval Air Station Oceana (see accompanying article) and the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, better known as DARPA. Here the Commonwealth and VNDIA have played an important role, providing and administering grants to date of \$47.5 million to match local dollars in a \$100 million civilian investment in retaining these two important installations.

There were some losses for Virginia, as several commands and other tenants were moved out of state. The highest profile losses, the closure of Fort Monroe and relocation of thousands of workers from leased space in Arlington, have been eased by knowing that the majority of jobs in both cases were moved "down the street" to Fort Eustis and Alexandria, respectively. Arlington has been working diligently to fill the expected vacancies and assist in workforce transition, and the state has created an authority dedicated to redeveloping and managing Fort Monroe following the Army's departure.

Many adjustments have been made on the state and local level to help mitigate the growth-related affects of BRAC. Changes in personnel, in particular, have forced the public and private sectors to find new approaches to housing, education, child

care, municipal services, trailing spouse employment and the big one, transportation.

The final year of BRAC implementation will likely not answer the remaining questions of transportation. Commuting patterns, mass transit use and the scope of congestion won't be known until job locations are moved. There are still intersections to upgrade near Fort Lee, roads to widen in Hampton Roads, and major improvements needed near Marine Corps Base Quantico and Fort Belvoir. In all, it's estimated that \$826 million in roadway improvements were made necessary by BRAC. About half of this has been funded, 63 percent through state funds and the remainder a combination of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) money, the DoD and congressional earmarks.

The Defense Department has done an incredible amount of planning and construction to ensure that the moves will happen by the September 15, 2011 deadline. Virginia and her localities, too, have done tremendous work to prepare their communities for the changes, and have committed significant amounts of scarce resources in doing so. It's clear that Virginia is committed to remaining a strong, viable partner in national defense.



The new National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) headquarters at Fort Belvoir's NGA Campus East (formerly the Engineer Proving Ground) will consolidate NGA facilities from around the National Capital Region. The \$1.7 billion campus is the largest single BRAC project in the Commonwealth, and will have more than 8,000 employees when operational next year.

The campus is a major factor in several transportation projects now underway, including the completion of the Fairfax County Parkway, a direct access ramp from I-95 South and direct access from I-95 High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll lanes.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

Va. Beach - ADC community of the year



Children greet returning pilots from Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7 during a homecoming celebration at NAS Oceana following a five-month deployment supporting operations in Afghanistan with the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69).

CVW-7 is one of five carrier air wings stationed at Oceana, and the base has a total of 19 aircraft squadrons. The Defense Department lists the base's replacement value (including the Dam Neck Annex) at \$2.1 billion.

July 29, 2009. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication 2nd Class Wilyanna C. Harper.

The city of Virginia Beach was named the 2010 Association of Defense Communities (ADC) Active Base Community of the Year at the ADC's annual conference in August. The award recognizes an active defense community whose efforts in building partnerships with a military installation have enhanced military value and the overall economic development of the community.

Naval Air Station Oceana and Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, both in Virginia Beach, play integral roles in national defense. It came as a shock, then, when the 2005 BRAC Commission recommended relocating the East Coast Master Jet Base to Cecil Field, Florida, stripping Oceana of its main tenants. The base is a significant economic engine for the community, with nearly 16,000 Defense Department and contractor jobs and a total payroll of nearly \$1 billion. State and local leaders rallied to move Oceana off the realignment list, and agreed to considerable changes to ensure the Navy that Oceana should remain intact.

The issue threatening Oceana was encroachment, and the city has since implemented aggressive strategies to roll-back development and population densities around the base, particularly in accident potential zones created by flight patterns. VNDIA administers a grant of \$7.5 million in state funds, matched by local funds, each year to make these changes happen.

The end result is success – Virginia Beach has been able to reorganize development and further its relationship with the Navy, and has created an award winning program out of near catastrophe.

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Executive Director Dave Dickson announced his retirement this past July to the VNDIA board, after nearly 40 years of public service in Virginia that has included heading both VNDIA and its predecessor, the Virginia Commission on Military Bases.

VNDIA seeks Exec. Director

The authority is now seeking an experienced public executive to continue Dickson's successes. This position works for an 18-member board of directors comprised of senior retired military, civic and business leaders, all appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House or the Senate Rules Committee. Qualified candidates must have considerable experience in public management and a strong ability to work with the board and lead its staff in a military economic development role. A graduate degree in business, economics, finance or a related field is preferred.

Additional information and applications are available on the [VNDIA Employment](#) page of the authority's website, www.vndia.org. The deadline for applications is October 6, 2010.

Coming Events

September 29, 2010

[Virginia Military Advisory Council \(VMAC\) Meeting](#); Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Arlington, Va.
Contact: Wendy Hoffman, (804) 225-3882/wendy.hoffman@governor.virginia.gov

October 12-14, 2010

[Governor's Conference on Energy](#); Richmond Convention Center, Richmond, Va.
Contact: Iman Robinson, (804) 692-2547/iman.robinson@governor.virginia.gov

October 13, 2010

[VNDIA Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting](#); Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, Va.
Contact: Patrick Tremblay, (804) 545-5716/ptremblay@YesVirginia.org

October 21, 2010

[Va. Dept. of Business Assistance](#)
Fort Lee Society of Am. Mil. Engineers State & Federal Procurement Seminar; Fort Lee, Va.
Contact: Tammy Farmer, (804) 371-8258/tammy.farmer@vdba.virginia.gov