

Fort Worth District partners with Corps districts and small business community to take on \$2 billion Fort Bliss military construction project for Army Transformation

**Story and photos by Edward Rivera
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FORT WORTH, Texas -- "If you build it, he will come," says the voice in the movie Field of Dreams. Well, the Fort Worth District hears a different voice, whispering, "They are coming, so you better build it, and build it fast."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is not talking about a baseball field for the ghosts of 18 ballplayers, but, what would amount to a small city for approximately 19,000 Soldiers, returning from overseas installations to Fort Bliss, Texas.

"My mission is to provide quality facilities for Soldiers coming to Fort Bliss from various locations within a specific timeframe," said Col. John R. Minahan, commander, Fort Worth District.

As part of the Army's Transformation, a division headquarters, four Brigade Combat Teams and a Combat Aviation Brigade will make Fort Bliss their home. According to Robert P. Morris, Jr., Base Realignment and Closure program manager for the Fort Worth District, this influx brings a need for headquarters and administrative space, dining facilities, aircraft hangars, arms rooms, unit storage facilities and barracks for approximately 19,000 Soldiers.

"We're going to be basically building another city at Biggs (Army Airfield). More than \$2 billion in construction projects have been programmed for Fort Bliss," said Minahan to more than 600 business owners at an Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College, Valle Verde Campus. "We need the help of businesses in the transformation of the Army that is taking place."

This tremendous transformation project is being undertaken while the Army is still at war. Not only must the Corps build for the new Brigade Combat Team footprint, but, it

must also accept and meet the challenges set for it, by the Army, to meet their cost and schedule requirements.

“The business community's support is essential in helping the Corps of Engineers meet the challenge of building the improvements on schedule and on cost,” said Minahan.

But, the business community is not the only source from which the Fort Worth District will get help. Five other Corps districts will join forces with Fort Worth in a new Product Line Support approach to accomplish the mission. According to Morris, rather than hire a large number of new employees to handle this increased workload, the Fort Worth District is taking a regional approach to the work.

“Fort Worth is partnering with districts in Sacramento, Calif., Albuquerque, N.M., Tulsa, Okla., Little Rock, Ark., and Galveston, Texas. Each district is responsible for a particular Product Line and will handle the facilities in that Product Line from 'cradle to grave,” said Morris.

Fort Worth will be responsible for infrastructure, barracks, and training ranges in addition to providing a central point of contact and coordinating the activities of the other Product Line Districts.

The Product Line District responsibilities: Albuquerque, company operations facilities; Galveston, ammunition storage facilities and parking facilities; Little Rock, dining facilities and aircraft hangars; Sacramento, brigade and battalion headquarters buildings and unit storage facilities; and Tulsa, maintenance facilities.

“Besides sharing the workload, this approach also builds expertise levels which should result in time savings and institutionalizing lessons learned,” said Morris.

With the historic groundbreaking in the near future, the Fort Worth District has also broken ground on another new approach to managing projects of this magnitude. Morris

explains, with most of the units going into new construction in an undeveloped portion of Biggs Army Airfield, the District is using a Land Development Engineer approach.

“The LDE brings large-scale development experience to the Corps and will be valuable, especially in the infrastructure planning and coordination of facilities construction,” said Morris.

New ideas, new directions and new partnerships will be the cornerstone of the military construction on Fort Bliss. The partnering between Corps districts and the desire of the Corps to engage the small business community, in El Paso and beyond, will usher in a new era of teamwork for the nation and the Soldiers supporting their country.

During the Industry Day, Rep. Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso, made it clear to the Corps of Engineers that the small businesses and others in the El Paso business community and abroad would be supportive, "and show that El Paso is 100 percent behind the Army."



Lisa C. Billman (right), Fort Worth District, contract specialist distributes information to several small business representatives during a networking opportunity at Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College. Billman also gave a presentation to the more than 600 attendees on submitting a Best Value proposal.



Paul Stone (left), Procurement Center representative, Small Business Administration, Fort Worth, Texas, talks to small business representatives during a networking opportunity at Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College. Stone also gave a presentation to the more than 600 attendees on the SBA and one on joint ventures.



Col. John R. Minahan, commander, Fort Worth District, welcomed more than 600 business representatives to the Corps of Engineers-sponsored Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College. Minahan talked about the small city, for approximately 19,000 Soldiers, that will have to be built at Fort Bliss, Texas, and how the small business community will play a role in meeting the Army's cost and schedule requirements.