



## Economic Development Administration Economic Development Today

*This telecast was provided through a cooperative agreement between the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC).*

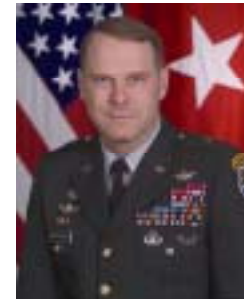


### Community Economic Development to Support Growth

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On Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006 the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) along with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) conducted a telecast on “Community Economic Development to Support Growth.” Officials from the Department of Defense discussed the socio-economic issues related to growth as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC).

During the telecast, BG John Macdonald, commanding general of the U.S. Army Community and Family Development Center, Installation and Management Agency spoke about how his work addresses the social welfare issues related to BRAC ‘05, such as readying schools for the influx of new students. The Center has 167 missions that crossover the soldiers, their families, and their welfare. BG Macdonald states, “Our soldiers move around and so wherever they go to becomes home. So, we focus our installations on being as close to home-like as possible.”



In order to achieve success with these missions, the Center works with local Chambers of Commerce, other local economic development agencies, as well as with the local and State governments of the communities facing growth under BRAC ‘05. BG Macdonald states that “Our very best (programs) are right at the school level.” These school-level programs are vital to the success of a base realignment. He states, “You can take a soldier and put him in an open field and that’s training. You can take a spouse and put a fresh coat of paint on the house and she has hope. But, if you ever try to move the kids without having the schools ready or the child development centers ready, you’re going to have a big problem.”

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The school level programs implemented by the Center involve training superintendents and counselors on what to expect in students that have relocated. One such school program is the “Student to Student” letter exchange program. This program has students “pen pal” with future students that will be moving to their community. “Imagine a youngster in El

Paso who is able to write to a student in Heidelberg to tell them what the school’s all about,” said BG Macdonald.

BG Macdonald gave the example of El Paso, Texas as “leading the league” in being very successful in accommodating the influx of school age children as a result of BRAC. El Paso was able to achieve this success in a number of ways, such as having a strong supporter in Congressman Silvestre Reyes who was able to secure local support, having advocated the passing of a number of bond issues so that schools could be financed, and securing the construction of a teachers college built at the University of Texas, El Paso to deal with the over 1,000 teachers and school administrators needed to meet the new education demands in the area.

The telecast featured an interview with Philip W. Grone, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Installations and Environment.



Mr. Grone explained how BRAC '05 is part of a major, worldwide strategic repositioning effort of military assets. According to Mr. Grone, “these efforts are the most significant installation transformation in terms of our basing and missions since the second World War.” Key parts of the transformation include: better utilization of excess capacity; converting resources/assets that are no longer required; recouping and reallocating assets to better suit the military’s needs; and, moving missions to create Centers of Excellence. Overall, the goal of the installation transformation is to achieve better military efficiency.

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Mr. Grone highlighted a number of success stories associated with BRAC '05. Among them were the Naval Training Center in Orlando, Florida, which recovered very effectively due to strong local leadership; the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado, which was reused and turned into a medical campus by the University of Colorado; and Fort Sheridan, located outside of Chicago, which was turned into a housing development.

The telecast likewise featured an interview with Patrick J. O’Brien, Director of the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. O’Brien spoke about the economic impact communities may experience during base realignment. Some locations will experience an influx of thousands of people, which will significantly impact on the need for affordable housing, schools, roads and transportation, water and sewer services, police and fire protection, medical service providers, and job opportunities for spouses. Additionally, installations may be expansive, generally spanning over more than one jurisdiction. These jurisdictions will therefore have to work collectively to achieve success.



As an example, Mr. O'Brien spoke about how some communities are dealing with traffic-related issues as a result of BRAC growth. Mr. O'Brien states that there has been "a mix of behavior and responses." Some States have gone into the locale and created a coordinating body to blend the competing interests in the area, which allows the state to be more responsive.

Mr. O'Brien states, "People don't have to reinvent the wheel on growth," they can use as models, communities that have already shown success in base realignment. There are certain fundamental issues that communities must be capable of responding to in order to achieve success. These are as follows: Organize themselves; Speak with one voice; Identify likely impact; Assess priorities and needs; Develop realistic plans; Build partnerships; Foster public and private sector creativity; Leverage local, state, and federal resources.

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Some lessons learned from communities that have successfully responded to growth under BRAC are: to time public investments along with private to coincide with when the military comes; leverage regional resources; build on strengths; and benchmark with peers.

The OEA provides a number of publications to assist communities in transition. For further information, please visit OEA's web site at [www.oea.gov](http://www.oea.gov) where you will find a list of grant opportunities, tools and resources, such as the following:

- *BRAC Implementation Regulations and Base Redevelopment & Realignment Manual*
- *Joint Land Use Study: Program Guidance Manual*
- *Organizing for BRAC*
- *Base Redevelopment Planning for BRAC Sites*
- *DVD Video of the "Communities Responding to Growth" presentation as taped from the 2006 OSD/Military Service/Community Conference.*

The telecast ended with the "Communities Responding to Growth" presentation, as taped from the *OSD/Military Service/Community Conference--Responding to BRAC 05* held in Atlanta, Georgia on May 2-5, 2006 (<https://www.respondingtobrac.com/conference.asp>). This presentation featured Elizabeth Bax, *Executive Director, Rolla Regional Economic Committee* and Terrance Roche, *Former Installation Commander, Ft. Drum, N.Y.* Ms. Bax and Mr. Roche spoke about their experiences, challenges, and successes in working with communities impacted by base realignment.

Through Fiscal Year 2004, Federal agencies have provided \$1.9 billion in assistance to previous rounds of base realignment. As reiterated by the telecast participants, growth under BRAC '05 is often the largest and most complex economic development effort taken on by a community. Reuse of a military base creates a number of opportunities for communities, including diversification of their local economy through local job creation, expansion of the local tax base, and satisfaction of a range of community needs through the use of new public facilities.

This telecast was moderated by Matthew E. Crow, Director of Communications, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. It may be viewed in full on the EDA website at: [www.eda.gov/NewsEvents/WebCastsVideos.xml](http://www.eda.gov/NewsEvents/WebCastsVideos.xml).

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