

Friday, December 11, 2009

Military center a go

Work proceeds on huge \$40M facility

Austin Business Journal - by [Kate Harrington](#) ABJ Staff



Submitted Rendering

The Armed Forces Guard and Reserve Center at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport is in the design stage now.

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A massive government project planned near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport that was delayed several years ago is back on track.

The Armed Forces Guard and Reserve Center at ABIA, a \$40 million project, is planned to span about 250,000 square feet on General Aviation Avenue and act as a second phase to an existing aviation support facility. The bulk of the new project will be a joint reserve facility serving multiple military branches, including Army Reserves, the Texas State Guard and the Marines. Those branches will use the center to muster and train, said Scott Francis, a principal with engineering firm Jaster-Quintanilla, the structural engineer for the project. The center will also include a vehicle maintenance facility and storage building.

Turner+Ramirez Architects is the architect. EEA Consulting Engineers is working on mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering, and Jose I. Guerra Inc. is the civil engineer for the center.

Francis said Jaster-Quintanilla started working on the design for the center in 2003, but several factors delayed the project shortly after design started, including budgetary issues and the construction of a similar center in Round Rock.

The engineering and architectural team will now pick up where design left off and move ahead with completing design documents, Francis said. A solicitation for a general contractor will likely go out in 2010, he said.

Beyond that, details remain vague. A U.S. government representative who asked to remain unnamed because of the project's pending status said the center's renewed activity is a request from President Obama.

The project is in the House and Senate versions of the fiscal 2010 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill. Both versions would appropriate \$16.5 million for the reserve center and \$5.7 million for the maintenance facility, but there are differences in the bills, and a conference committee has yet to meet to reconcile them. As a result, the source said, there aren't many details available yet regarding a timeline for construction, how many government and civilian employees will staff the new center or what kind of economic impact it may have.

The proposed House bill includes \$24.6 billion for military construction.

In general, military projects have a large and fairly stable economic impact on communities, said Monica Hull, marketing director for **Copperas Cove Economic Development Corp.**, which is adjacent to Fort Hood.

"Something aligned with the military is nice to have in any community because of its stability," Hull said. "Fort Hood is a factory that will never shut down. And the economic impact is immense."

Hull said military projects can mean more retail sales tax income, new and indirect job creation, and increased demand for housing.

Francis said for Jaster-Quintanilla that the project will certainly have a welcome impact, since there aren't many projects of that magnitude happening.

"Locally, the commercial market has dwindled quite a bit with the shortage of lending and credit," he said. "It's a great time for public entities and institutions to build. They generally have budgets in place, and there's so much competition, they're getting more value. The projects that are really keeping us busy are military and educational."

Courtesy of JB Goodwin