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UPDATE ON THE INSTALLATION RESTORATION PROGRAM AT RICHARDS GEBUR AIR
FORCE BASE KANSAS CITY MO
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RICHARDS GEBUR AIR FORCE BASE

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FastTrack

An Update on the Installation Restoration Program at Richards-Gebaur

OPERATING LOCATION Q, AIR FORCE BASE CONVERSION AGENCY
15471 HANGAR ROAD, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64147-1220

Cleanup Targets Fuel Storage Site

Investigation determines contamination not spreading

Environmental scientists involved in restoration activities at the former Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base, which was closed in 1994, have found traces of contamination at a fuel storage yard there. They emphasize that the contamination has not been spreading.

Air Force studies conducted at the storage yard included soil sampling and groundwater analyses. Those studies found that the surface and subsurface soils were contaminated by petroleum hydrocarbons.

During the years that Richards-Gebaur was an active base, bulk quantities of aviation and heating fuel were stored there and piped to different locations on the base. Site investigations indicate a number of accidental spills occurred there, resulting in the contamination of approximately 3700 cubic yards of soil.

Mark Esch, base environmental coordinator for the Air Force Base Conversion Agency, emphasized, "There is no significant human health risk or danger to the environment. No significant

migration of contaminants was detected in the soil and no contaminants were found in the groundwater."

Environmental scientists will initiate a bioremediation process to clean up the soil.

Esch explained that the bioremediation process produces

"The bioremediation for the petroleum contaminant is estimated to take only 18 months to complete."

microbes that eat the petroleum contaminant.

A natural environment will be created by loosely layering soil in an area that is 50 by 100 feet, two feet deep, with a two-foot base of sand. The soil will be nurtured with a phosphate-rich fertilizer compound about three times a week. The soil will also be turned and aerated.

Air Force officials said the innovative technology speeds up nature's lengthy work of breaking down contaminants in the soil.

"The natural process is called 'natural attenuation' and normally can take up to 50 years," said Esch. "The bioremediation for the project is estimated to take 18 months to complete."

The Air Force plans to issue a final report on the site when the restoration process is complete.

The Installation Restoration Program is the Air Force's equivalent to the Superfund cleanup program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Air Force has announced a "fast track" commitment to environmental restoration of Richards-Gebaur so the property can be transferred to civilian use.

All of the restoration processes comply with all state and federal laws and regulations. The U.S. EPA and Missouri Department of Natural Resources are active participants in the program.

Information regarding the program is available for public review at the base's environmental office, located at 15471 Hangar Road.

Restoration Advisory Board Hosts Environmental Open House at Air Show

While the eyes of thousands will be cast skyward during the upcoming air show at the former Richards Gebaur Air Force Base, the Air Force also hopes to attract interest in the environmental restoration program at the base.

The Air Force will host an Environmental Open House in conjunction with the aerial demonstrations July 29-30.

Exhibits will outline the progress of the environmental cleanup at Richards-Gebaur, and will feature the latest remediation technologies. Environmental scientists from the Air Force and government contractors will be available to answer questions. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are also scheduled to participate.

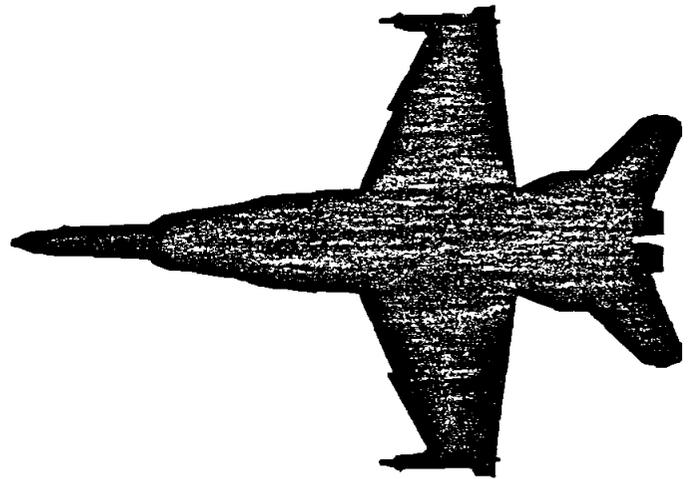
The environmental display will feature sites that have been identified for proposed cleanup. Visitors will also be able to see where new tenants occupy former base property.

The Environmental Open House is sponsored by the base's Restoration Advisory Board.

The board includes residents of the communities surrounding Richards-Gebaur who regularly meet with Air Force officials and representatives of other regulatory agencies to monitor the progress of the environmental cleanup.

The restoration activities at the former base include soil sampling and long-term monitoring of groundwater. A variety of restoration techniques are being considered to restore suspected contaminated areas. One of the more promising remediation technologies is bioremediation.

Although the base closed in June 1994, the Air Force is committed to a "fast track" environmental cleanup program before transferring property to civilian use.



The Environmental Open House will begin at 11 a.m. each day at the main aircraft hangar.

Implementing the Cleanup Process

The Department of Defense (DOD) issues guidelines to help expedite the environmental cleanup of Air Force bases designated for realignment or closure.

As lead agency, the Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA), under the direction of the Base Environmental Coordinator (BEC) has formed a Base Realignment and Closure Team (BCT), a BCT working group, and a Restoration Advisory Board to meet these guidelines.

The BCT members include the P. Mark Esch (the BEC), Bob Koke (representing Region 7 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), and Bob Geller (representing the Missouri Department of Natural Resources).

Through a cooperative effort, the BCT conducts periodic reviews and reaches consensus on environmental restoration decisions. All decisions must be in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

The BCT Project Team consists of the BCT, other key participants, and government contractors. The project team provides technical input and recommendations to the base closure team during the environmental cleanup process.

Officials Stress Public Involvement in Richards-Gebaur Cleanup Effort

Open records document environmental restoration

Officials involved in the environmental restoration of the former Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base are seeking active participation from citizens in nearby communities as cleanup work at the site continues.

Mark Esch, base environmental coordinator for the U.S. Air Force Base Conversion Agency, said today that community involvement is "a key component in our decision-making process" as the Air Force implements its "fast track" program for installation restoration.

"Our number one concern is that the public is provided with accurate and timely information regarding the environmental cleanup process," added Esch.

The primary vehicles for public involvement are a Restoration Advisory Board and the establishment of an "information repository" at the base.

The RAB is an advisory body. "But it acts as a focal point for the exchange of information between the Air Force and the local community on the restoration activities," said Esch. Local RAB members meet regularly to review and comment on technical documents and plans regarding to the environmental studies and remediation programs. The meetings are open to the public, and a support staff helps to

translate technical information and provide "plain language information" to RAB members.

Meanwhile, an "information repository" has been established at the base environmental office. It chronicles all aspects of the Installation Restoration Program at the base.

The IRP is the Air Force's equivalent to the Superfund cleanup program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The IRP program investigates and cleans up contamination at Richards Gebaur that may have resulted from previous accidental spills, leaks, and waste disposal practices.

"Most of these activities occurred years before laws were passed or knowledge was obtained that these practices could pose potential problems to human health or the environment," noted Esch.

While some areas of the base have been contaminated by various hazardous substances and contaminants, a number of environmental cleanup actions have been initiated. "The phases of each of the environmental cleanup processes are outlined in the information repository," added Esch.

The process is conducted with the participation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

"Our goal is total compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations," emphasized Esch. "Using a variety of processes, we are on a fast-track schedule to return property to civilian use," he concluded.

Information on restoration advisory board membership is available at (816) 348-2511, extension 24. The public is also invited to visit the environmental office for RAB information and review of the information repository. The office is at 15471 Hangar Road.

Cleanup Dates Available

If you would like to be added to the mailing list for information concerning the installation restoration program at Richards Gebaur, contact:

BRAC Environmental Office
OLQ, AFBCA
15471 Hangar Road
Kansas City, MO 64147-1220

The Cleanup: Some Commonly Asked Questions

Q *Why is it taking so long to clean up the base and turn it over to the community?*

A Environmental cleanup is a critical process for minimizing risk to human health and the environment. Cleanup measures must be in place before property can be transferred. However, environmental cleanup is ongoing while reuse activity takes place. The Air Force is fully committed to cleaning up the environment -- no matter how long it takes.

Sites are often complex -- involving groundwater and soil contamination. Determining whether contamination exists takes time and is a progressive, step-by-step effort. Regulatory requirements are understandably strict, and compliance actions take time to complete.

Q *What has been done to clean up the base?*

A Richards-Gebaur's environmental cleanup program has been on a "fast track" for the past two years. Many environmental studies are complete or will be completed by 1998. The goal is to have remedies in place for all sites by 1999. This will allow the Air Force to transfer the property safely. The Air Force, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources are working with the community to ensure the cleanup and subsequent reuse of property go smoothly.

Real results are measured not only by the number of sites cleaned up, but also by the reduction of environmental risk. Responsible cleanup for return of the property to civilian use is our goal.

Q *What types of contamination are on Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base?*

A As small, self-contained cities, Air Force bases generate the same kinds of wastes produced by a city that has dry cleaners, gas stations, fire departments, hospitals, airport operations, etc. Most of the sites on Richards-Gebaur are typical of military installations. These sites include the fire training area, storage areas, and aircraft maintenance areas. The types of contaminants detected have properties primarily associated with cleaning fluids, solvents, or petroleum products. These same chemicals can be found in household products such as cleaning products, detergents, motor oils, etc.

Q *Who is responsible for cleaning up the contamination after the base is closed and the Air Force is gone?*

A The Air Force is committed to cleaning up the environmental contamination for all sites -- however long it takes. While cleanup may take a long period of time, it usually doesn't interfere with civilian reuse of the property. Almost all closed Air Force bases have reuse activities in the form of leased property while environmental cleanup actions are in progress.

