

INSTALLATION MISSION GROWTH

Community Profile

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Fort Knox, Kentucky

Community Contact

Brad Richardson
Executive Director
One Knox
270-352-1899
director@oneknox.com
www.oneknox.com

Installation Contact:

Connie Shaffery
Public Affairs Officer
502-624-7451
constance.shaffery@us.army.mil
www.knox.army.mil

State Contact:

Mark Needham
Special Assistant to the Governor
Commonwealth of Kentucky
The State Capital
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601
mark.needham@ky.gov

Community at a Glance

Growth Management Organization (GMO):

Lincoln Trail Development District

Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

Tier One Counties of Hardin, Meade, and Bullitt and Tier Two Counties of Breckinridge, Grayson, Larue, Nelson, Marion and Washington

Regional Population of affected area:

Current estimated population of all 9 counties is 325,000

Top growth challenges:

- Transportation
- Workforce
- Education
- Water and Sewer
- Health and Social Services

Outstanding requirements in support of mission growth:

Project Category	# of Projects	Sum of Project Cost	Sum of Funding Gap
Transportation	9	\$185,563,000	\$135,563,000
Education	TBD	\$29,000,000	\$21,740,000
Water and Waste Water	19	\$88,495,000	\$38,495,000
Total	28	\$117,495,000	\$195,799,000

Mission Growth at a Glance

Growth Action:

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Grow the Army (GTA), Army Modular Force (AMF), Global Defense Posture Review (GDPR)

Personnel Baseline and Growth Projection:

	Baseline (January 2005)	Build-out Projection (2011)
Military Personnel	5,565	8,655
Dependents	5,560	8,700
Civilian Personnel	3,550	4,860
Contractors	3,844	4,289

Source: Fort Knox Garrison Transformation Office

Growth Factors affecting community planning: Overlap of incoming/outgoing missions will result in a spike in population for a 2 year period. Population will increase – then decrease slightly. This cycle results in unique planning challenges.

Background

Community leaders in the private and public sector realized that to properly manage the Fort Knox BRAC 2005 process meant thinking and acting regionally. One Knox was established in January 2006 to provide the military partners (both Fort Knox and the relocating organizations) with a single point of contact through which information pertaining to BRAC would be disseminated to the local community and local planning efforts coordinated. The mission of One Knox is to serve as the central coordinating community agency to help the local nine-county region respond in the most positive ways to the growth opportunities associated with BRAC and Fort Knox. One Knox consists of an Executive Director, who reports to the One Knox policy council, a group of local business and government leaders, and operates as a unit of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD).



ONEKNOX

Figure 1: Fort Knox

One Knox also serves the soldiers and civilians from the incoming commands by providing needed information about local resources and amenities. One of the first activities of One Knox was to partner with Fort Knox to organize and conduct a “Community Road Show” to present to the incoming commands in the spring of 2006. In the fall of 2006 the State of Kentucky released a portion of its U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grant funds to LTADD to conduct a regional workforce study. At about the same time the Governor created the Governor’s BRAC Task Force of local, state, and Federal officials to address the local and regional issues brought about by BRAC. Following a change of administrations, the new Governor appointed the Governor’s Task Force on Military Base Realignment to oversee and expedite the actions required by the transformation.

With BRAC growth as the major catalyst, LTADD partnered with Louisville and seven additional counties outside the LTADD region to write a successful application for a \$5 million DOL Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Grant. Since then, seven counties in Southern Indiana were added to the WIRED 65 Region, and a major Regional Competitiveness Study was conducted to help identify strengths and weaknesses throughout the region. The findings of the study were used to develop an implementation plan, and requests for proposals were generated to award contracts to organizations that will carry out the work necessary to continue regional collaboration, and to help build the regional workforce pipeline. The BRAC transformation at Fort Knox will be a major beneficiary of this work.

A growth management plan was developed by LTADD for the Fort Knox region, using data compiled through various regional studies (Transportation, Healthcare, Transportation, Education, Housing, Economic Impact, and Workforce). LTADD is an existing, mature, regional governmental organization with considerable experience in planning and development. This issue-specific plan falls within the existing structure of the Kentucky Governor's Task Force on Military Base Realignment.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

Transportation

Area transportation shortfalls, relative to the increased traffic that the effects of BRAC are expected to bring, are being addressed. The limited capacity of some of the main arteries leading into Fort Knox is an existing traffic problem during certain times of the day and will only worsen with the realization of BRAC and non-BRAC growth at Fort Knox. Addressing these issues is a priority. Some have already been addressed, such as work having been completed on the widening of a major road leading to one of Fort Knox's main gates from two to three lanes. This was a State-funded project.

Nine critical projects, with an estimated cost of approximately \$185,563,000, have been identified, with an initial \$50 million included in the State's 2009 appropriations bill to begin planning and buying right-of-way property. An estimated additional \$135,563,000 is needed for construction associated with these projects.

Workforce

The regional workforce study projected that as many as 1,400, or perhaps more, job openings will need to be filled with the relocation of the U.S. Army Accessions Command (USAAC) and the Human Resources Command (HRC) to Fort Knox. As the transformation continues it appears quite likely that this projection was an accurate one, with the major critical shortfalls expected primarily in the Information Technology fields. It is expected that a majority of the highly-skilled human resource positions will be filled at the mid- and higher-levels from within the system, and from dedicated worldwide recruiting efforts. Many of the job opportunities available locally will most likely be at the entry level. Therefore, efforts to prepare the local workforce, as well as the displaced (current Fort Knox BRAC affected employees) workforce, have been undertaken by the Lincoln Trail Workforce Investment Board and One Knox. Much of the cost associated with these projects has been absorbed through a \$3 million DOL National Emergency Grant. Additionally, WIRED funds will be used to fund several other workforce related projects. Ongoing and completed projects are as follows:

- Conducted several Fort Knox BRAC federal hiring symposiums serving approximately 1500 people.
- Conducted college campus visits throughout the region, reaching more than 1200 students, faculty, and alumni.
- Conducted two Fort Knox BRAC Urban League Information Sessions reaching approximately 600 people.
- Created and printed "Blueprint for your Future" workbook for outgoing Fort Knox workforce. The "Blueprint" contained valuable information for this audience to help them make an informed decision about their futures.
- Seven "Community Tours" for members of the incoming BRAC organizations were planned, coordinated, and executed. These three-day events allowed workforce members to see for themselves what the region offered, and to dispel any myths they might have. Almost universally, the approximately 350 visitors indicated that they were now considering the move.
- Worked with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, and our Army partners to develop the Army 101 online course. While it does not guarantee a job, Army 101 will help make those who take the course more competitive, while giving them knowledge of how the Army is structured, missioned, and operated. Army Human Resources 101 and 102 are currently being developed and will be fielded in the fall of 2009. These will give applicants good basic knowledge about the kinds of jobs Army Human Resource professionals conduct. Again, completion of these online courses will not guarantee a job.

- Fielded the updated version of www.oneknox.com, which contains continually refreshed information about all things related to the Fort Knox BRAC, and how to find out more about, and make application for, the incoming jobs.
- Continued to conduct monthly “hands on” federal hiring sessions with Army partners. Here, regional job seekers learn to navigate the hiring system from Army civilian personnel experts. With two sessions each month, approximately 900 people have been trained. Additionally, college career center personnel and employees at the regional One Stop centers have completed these courses, so that they may help college students and other job seekers apply for jobs. An online version of this training is currently in production, with plans to post it on the One Knox web site this fall.

Education

Transition of Fort Knox from a trainee population with no families to a larger permanent party of military and Department of the Army civilian population means thousands of families with school-aged children will relocate to the region. In addition to the Fort Knox schools, three public school districts (Meade County, Elizabethtown Independent, and Hardin County) will experience student population increases. While increased property tax revenues will be realized with this population increase, the local communities do not currently have the financial resources to adequately prepare to meet these future public education needs. Of particular concern is a spike in the number of students that will occur midway in the Fort Knox buildup, when USAAC and HRC personnel have arrived, and before Armor Center personnel have departed. Although there will be an estimated net gain of approximately 2,000 students by 2013, during the interceding years the number will spike to an even greater number before it falls off again, to end at the estimated 2,000.

The Facilities Management Group of the Kentucky Governor’s Task Force on Military Base Realignment Education Committee estimated a capital need of \$29 million to meet BRAC growth needs. From the \$100 million that the state has budgeted for BRAC-related projects, Hardin County will receive \$6,708,730, and Meade County \$1,550,000. This leaves an estimated shortfall of approximately \$21,740,000.

Water & Waste Water

The Fort Knox region is experiencing organic growth, unrelated to Fort Knox, in addition to the BRAC and non-BRAC growth associated with the new missions at Fort Knox. Water and wastewater improvements, estimated to cost approximately \$75 million, will be needed to support the anticipated growth in this region. From the \$100 million that the state has budgeted for BRAC-related projects, \$5,958,000 has been designated for Water Projects and \$35,508,270 for Wastewater Projects for a total of \$42,466,270. This leaves an estimated shortfall of approximately \$33,533,000.

Health and Social Services

A regional taskforce made up of health and social service providers, area stakeholders, and representatives from the Fort Knox medical community undertook a comprehensive assessment of the health and social services needs and possible gaps that would exist as the population increases. The region is well positioned to meet these needs except in the mental health services realm where anticipated demand will exceed capacity. Existing mental health care providers who do not accept TRICARE further complicate the situation. Work is ongoing to address this critical issue through conversations with corporate leaders and local elected officials. The health services work group will continue to meet and pursue solutions to any perceived shortcoming in service delivery to military personnel and dependents. The Commonwealth and Fort Knox alleviated a child protective services issue in recent months due to the presence of this working group and its dialogue with Army personnel.

Housing

Under its current mission, many of the active duty personnel are assigned to live on-base. With the new BRAC and non-BRAC missions coming to Fort Knox, this will change and a greater percentage of Fort Knox personnel will live off-base. While there is currently a surplus of unsold homes in the region, it has been determined by an Army regional housing study that there will be a shortage of affordable homes in the region, both for potential owners and renters. Efforts are underway to ensure that the region responds to this issue appropriately. These include regular meetings

between Fort Knox housing personnel, Garrison, and One Knox. Meetings and forums with local developers and real estate professionals are ongoing – and a housing analysis is likely to be updated.

Additional Challenge

Hardin County and the cities of Radcliff and Elizabethtown have been experiencing growth since before the announcement of BRAC. This organic growth is further impacted by the BRAC and non-BRAC growth at Fort Knox. This is an enviable problem to have, but it does challenge community and regional capacity. The organic growth was incremental and thus the communities had learned how to absorb and assimilate that growth on a year-to-year basis. The BRAC and non-BRAC growth at Fort Knox will occur at a much more accelerated pace, creating new demands on the region's capacity to absorb the growth.

The economic downturn of the last year has resulted in a regional unemployment rate exceeding 10%, exacerbating an already difficult workforce situation. Since most of the unemployed workers do not have matching skills for the BRAC-related jobs, training and reemploying this population is a critical challenge.

Successes/Lessons Learned

The Fort Knox region has been successful in justifying and securing funds from the Office of Economic Adjustment, DOL, and from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. It is important to be aware of relevant state and Federal programs and to utilize this financial assistance to the fullest extent possible. These resources, however, only partially address the need to identify creative and innovative ways to procure necessary funding to support growth and sustain economic development. Resources from all levels of government, legislative initiatives, and creative financing tools from both the private and public sectors must be identified and explored on a continuous basis.

Ongoing communication is the cornerstone of the One Knox program. In addition to conducting a wide variety of studies, identifying gaps, and seeking funding support, the central coordinating agency has a valuable public information role for its numerous constituents. Whether it is providing community information to the relocating workforce and their families or keeping the local community apprised of Army unit arrivals and departures, communications and outreach efforts are paramount. The local citizenry needs to see and understand the value of being engaged in order to support the growth management efforts.

One Knox also addresses the need to provide the relocating workforce and their families with valid, coherent information about the region and attempt to overcome any misperceptions they may have. This initiative included the establishment of a user-friendly, state-of-the-art Web site, with a comprehensive listing of local community resources, attractions, and amenities. A second initiative included local efforts to "take the welcome mat on the road" and get "face-to-face" with the incoming workforce. This outreach initiative provided relocating workers the chance to engage community representatives in one-on-one dialogue, answer questions, learn about the community and overcome any misconceptions people may have. Continued dialogue with Army organizations and the relocating workforce is essential. This is accomplished through constant Web site updates, electronic newsletters, newspaper columns, community speaking engagements, active participation in installation BRAC meetings, planned community tours for representatives of the relocating organizations, and media engagement initiatives. Beginning in the fall of 2008, and continuing into the fall of 2009, seven community tours by the employees of the incoming organizations were conducted. More than 350 potential new residents visited the region, where they saw area attractions, met local leaders, talked with educators and more. They went home with questions answered, misconceptions erased and (in many cases) positive decisions made.

While efforts remain a work in progress, lessons learned to date include:

- Ongoing communication is essential. Target audiences include the employees of the incoming organizations, both military and civilian; the outgoing workforce (particularly displaced civilians); local businesses and organizations that will be effected by the transformation; and, the local population in general, who need to be kept up-to-date on ongoing BRAC activities. While all audiences seek similar information, their particular needs and concerns vary based on the service they need or provide. A Web site was established early on to serve as the centerpiece of communications efforts, and it was soon learned that flexibility and functionality of the site must constantly be improved. Ongoing grass roots face-to-face outreach to the local communities and the affected workforce is also critical. One Knox as the single point of contact has been an important regional communication tool. People quickly learned that it is the place to go to when they have a question. Through almost daily contact with the Army, relationships are being forged and strengthened that will last well beyond BRAC. Additionally, ongoing regional cooperation is at an unprecedented level. These relationships will benefit the community and the Army in the long term.
- Start planning immediately. The BRAC announcement was made in 2005 with all actions to be complete by 2011. At the time, six years may have seemed like a long time, but transportation improvements require a long lead time and school construction or renovation can take several years. Workforce training programs take years to build an adequate labor pipeline from which to recruit and hire. Act quickly to procure the funds to do the analysis and seek the resources to make the necessary changes. In Kentucky the state budget is prepared biannually; thus, a budget proposal for the 2008 legislative session had to be submitted even though a thorough assessment of needs had not and could not be completed. The alternative of waiting until the 2010 state legislative session was not a viable option. The transportation, education and infrastructure needs identified above were included in the budget proposal. The result was \$100 million included in the FY09 Appropriations Bill
- Close coordination with the military has been invaluable. It is to everyone's benefit to make this process work. The Army has positions to fill, and there are local and regional people who need well-paying steady jobs. The Army cannot complete its mission without a highly-motivated, well-trained workforce. Thus, the community has worked with the military to develop curricula such as Army 101 to help ensure that students will have the opportunity to take the courses that can help them be better qualified for the new jobs. One Knox worked with the Army to collect information about jobs and how to apply for them online. One Knox is making regular visits to career fairs and numerous college campuses. These efforts will help create a local workforce that can respond positively to the opportunities at Fort Knox.
- One Knox also worked with the community and our Army partners to hold a College Presidents Symposium, where educators learned about the coming opportunities, and how they can prepare themselves and their students to take advantage.
- Capitalize on the opportunity. The growth of Fort Knox is seen as the biggest economic development opportunity to occur in Kentucky in recent years. One Knox's goal is to help use this opportunity to transform the region. This means transforming the workforce from largely a blue collar workforce to a highly-skilled white collar workforce. To do that requires a transformation of the secondary and post-secondary educational expectations. A highly-trained workforce means a well-educated workforce. Businesses looking to expand or relocate will be more inclined to consider the Fort Knox area if there is an existing, proven workforce. Relationships have been built throughout the region that will continue well into the future. Initiatives such as the WIRED grant can help be the catalyst for that transformation.