

HOWARD COUNTY BRAC TASK FORCE

BRAC BIT: #37

DATE: 4 May 2009

SUBJECT(S): BRAC Growth and Infrastructure Funding

POINT OF CONTACT: Kent Menser (410-313-6521)

kmenser@howardcountymd.gov

DISCUSSION:

1. **BRAC “gainers” share concerns:** The following article identifies BRAC driven infrastructure issues in Huntsville, Alabama that are similar to our situation in the Fort Meade area. Patrick O’Brien is the Director of the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in the DOD.

2. **“BRAC cost needs more federal aid, official says”**

Sunday, May 03, 2009

By PATRICIA C. McCARTER

Huntsville (AL) Times Staff Writer patricia.mccarter@htimes.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. - It's not easy in a recession to drum up sympathy for your community's growing pains. But a Department of Defense official says cities preparing for growth because military commands are relocating to their bases shouldn't have to bear the financial brunt of building infrastructure to support that influx of jobs and people. Patrick O'Brien, director of the Office of Economic Adjustment for the Defense Department, told a group of local Chamber of Commerce members visiting Washington, D.C., last week that the federal government needs to provide much more money to communities gaining commands through a 2005 decision of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. O'Brien said he's working with almost two dozen "growth locations" such as Redstone Arsenal, and he hears the same concerns from all of them. They need money for roads. They need money for new schools. They need money to expand their sewer and water systems. O'Brien said North Alabama alone will have \$1.8 billion in unfunded needs for the next several years due to the 4,700 federal jobs plus more than 5,000 contractor jobs on their way per relocation of seven military commands. U.S. Rep. Parker Griffith, the Democrat congressman from the 5th District, said there was a misconception early that BRAC jobs were accompanied by plenty of federal dollars to get ready for the influx. Instead, local leaders - immensely grateful for the chance to grow - remain concerned if they'll be ready when all of the jobs have relocated by 2011. It is, the congressman said, "a problem of success..." "Our state delegations (of senators and congressmen) are working together, but it can take years to get funding and then even longer to get the projects done," he said"...

O'Brien told the Chamber members from Madison and Morgan counties that they have to continually remind their elected officials of their needs, which was in fact the purpose of the annual trip to Washington. O'Brien's office gave the Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee an \$800,000 grant to do a comprehensive 13-county study of what the region needs to be ready. "It's not a sprint," O'Brien said. "It's a marathon."