

## OMD official gives chamber prez credit for bringing facility to city



### Broken Arrow Ledger

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04/03/2008

BROKEN ARROW - Citizens given a glimpse of what the new Armed Forces Reserve Center may look similar to.

It's one of seven Armed Forces Reserve Centers in Oklahoma, and the biggest of them all, said Lt. Col. Brent Wright, the state resources manager for the Oklahoma Military Department, and a Broken Arrowan.

Wright didn't have a rendering to show the Broken Arrow Area Chamber of Commerce members at Wednesday's luncheon because the design has not yet been finalized, but he said construction will begin in spring 2009 and be completed in 2011, when virtually all guard members and reservists in northeastern Oklahoma will have closed their armories and will moved their training to Broken Arrow.

Other AFRCs will be built in Mustang, Enid, McAlester, Muskogee, Norman, West Oklahoma City and Fort Sill at Lawton.

The State of Oklahoma appropriated \$1.5 million, and along with \$107 million in federal funds, land was purchased for two of the facilities. The remaining five will be built within existing military enclaves or the land has been donated for them.

"If not for Mickey Thompson (Broken Arrow Area Chamber of Commerce president), we would not be in Broken Arrow right now," Wright said.

The OMD had identified a piece of property in north Tulsa's Cherokee Park for the project and had decided to ask for an exception to the mandate the AFRC had to be built in Broken Arrow, when Thompson stepped in and found a plot of land on Broken Arrow's east side, Wright said.

The influx of personnel, rotating weekly through the facility from every branch of the military, will be enormous, said Wright.

"Branches will take turns every weekend," Wright said.

The facility he termed a "superarmory" will have 212,00 square feet and two levels. An additional 48,000-square-foot field maintenance support center will complete the facility for a total cost of about \$67 million.

Wright said he expects about fulltime 215 personnel assigned to the facility, some of them transferred from other locations, and some new positions.

Wright said the OMD has not been able to convince the Oklahoma Department of Transportation "diamond" ramps are needed on the Muskogee Turnpike for more direct access to the property at 101st and Midway Road, and asked his listeners to contact their legislators as soon as possible regarding the matter.