## BASE REALIGNIMENT AND CLOSURE

## Community Profile

November 2009

# Naval Air Station Brunswick and Topsham Annex, Maine

#### **Community Contact:**

Steve Levesque
Executive Director
Midcoast Regional
Redevelopment Authority
5450 Fitch Avenue
Brunswick, ME 04011
207-798-6512
stevel@mrra.us

#### Web Address:

www.mrra.us

#### **Installation Contact:**

Marty McMahon Commanding Officer NAS Brunswick 1251 Orion St Brunswick, ME 04011 207-921-2204 martin.g.mcmahon@navy.mil

#### **State Contact:**

James Nimon Senior Economic Advisor Office of the Governor #1 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0001 207-287-3531 james.nimon@maine.gov

#### Closure at a Glance

#### Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

Planning LRAs: Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority/Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority

Implementation LRA: Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA)

#### Geographic area affected by closing:

Brunswick, Freeport, Durham, and Freeport, Maine (Cumberland County); the eleven communities of Sagadahoc County, including Topsham, Maine

Population of affected area (before closure): 77,828

**Total Acres to be Disposed:** 3,312

**Estimated Job Loss Impact:** 

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Jobs	Lost	
Military Personnel*	4,900	
Civilian Personnel*	700	
Contractors**	120	

Sources: Understanding the Impact: Closing Naval Air Station Brunswick; Maine State Planning Office, January 2007 (Military and Civilian Personnel) The Impact of the BRAC Ordered Closure of the Brunswick Naval Air Station: A Regional Community Audit; March 31, 2006 (Contractors)

#### **Economic Adjustment Challenges**

- Severe Socio-economic Impacts
- Property Vacancies
- Energy Costs and Sustainability
- Business Attraction
- Property Conveyances

#### **Key Reuse Planning & Property Disposal Milestones**

2/16/07	Federal Determination of Surplus
5/14/07	LRA Homeless Outreach Completed
1/23/08	Reuse Plan Received by Department of Housing and Urban
	Development (HUD)/Military Service
4/09/09	HUD Determination on Submission
Pending	National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Disposal
	Decision
Pending	Base Closure

## **Organization**

Shortly after the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decision to close BNAS was final, the Governor, the local legislative delegation, and the Brunswick and Topsham town councils established the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority (BLRA) and the Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority (TLRA) respectively. BLRA was responsible for developing the reuse master plan for the Naval Air Station in Brunswick and TLRA developed the reuse master plan for the Topsham Annex.

Stakeholders for the BLRA and the TLRA included:

- Town of Brunswick
- Town of Topsham
- Governor's Advisory Committee
- Base Clean Up Team
- Restoration Advisory Board
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Residents and Business Community
- State and Federal Elected Officials
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

With the completion of the reuse master plans for Brunswick and the Topsham Annex, BLRA and TLRA were dissolved at the end of December 2007.

The Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA) was formed by the State of Maine in September 2007 and opened its offices in January 2008. Its mission is to manage the transition of base properties from military to civilian uses; redevelop base properties; and create new high quality jobs. Its 11-member Board of Trustees is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

MRRA has the authority to acquire, hold, and lease property; borrow money; apply for grants; and form special utility districts, including sewer disposal, solid waste disposal, water, energy facilities, and airport uses.

Stakeholders for the MRRA include:

- Town of Brunswick
- Town of Topsham
- Governor's Advisory Committee
- Base Clean Up Team
- Restoration Advisory Board
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Public Benefit Conveyance (PBC) Recipients
- Department of the Navy
- Office of Economic Adjustment
- BRAC Transition Office
- Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)
- 14 communities in the vicinity of the base
- Tedford Housing
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Maine Congressional Delegation
- Maine State Legislature
- Maine Department of Labor
- MRRA Board of Directors
- MRRA Staff

### **Reuse Plan/Other Studies**

#### Brunswick

NASB is a 3,300-acre military enclave totally within the jurisdictional limits of the Town of Brunswick, in Cumberland County, Maine. Besides the main base, three other isolated properties are included in this Reuse Master Plan: the 77-acre McKeen housing site, located about two miles west of the main base on McKeen Street southwest of downtown Brunswick; the 69-acre East Brunswick Transmitter Site, located approximately two miles northeast of the main base, off Old Bath Road; and a .26-acre parcel former observation site located near Phippsburg, Maine.

The base property assets include:

- Two 8,000 foot runways with FAA state-of-the-art instrument landing system
- Extensive broadband infrastructure
- 1,115 housing units located on and around NASB, including 702 family units
- Two million square feet of commercial and industrial space including 500,000 square feet of hangar space
- Nine hole golf course
- World-class aviation facilities including jet engine test and maintenance facilities, ground support equipment maintenance facilities, and 4.5 million square feet of aircraft parking apron space

#### Reuse Plan Vision and Intent

The Reuse Master Plan for NASB represents a unique opportunity to establish not only a vibrant live/work/play/educate environment, but also centers of excellence for technology innovation, environmental sustainability, and "green" community development. From an economic development perspective, the plan provides a framework within which a variety of corporate, business, academic, recreational, and community services can flourish—and from a community development perspective, the plan promotes a strong sense of place based on smart growth principles that will serve as a model for future sustainable development throughout the region.

#### Key Reuse Goals

The key reuse goals for NASB grew largely from an extensive public engagement effort. What BLRA heard was that the public wanted the reuse master plan to include:

- Business development and expansion
- Centers of excellence in advanced technologies
- Top notch educational facilities
- A variety of housing options
- 1,500 acres of open space and outdoor recreation opportunities
- Prime site for business location

Based on input from the public, inventory and assessment of local, regional, and state market conditions, and influenced by the availability of existing on-base infrastructure and facility assets, the following land uses are envisioned for the property:

- Airport Operations
- Aviation-Related Business
- Professional Office Space
- Community Mixed Use
- Business and Technology Industries
- Education
- Residential
- Recreation and Open Space
- Natural Areas

Development of the Reuse Master Plan was an outcome of a master reuse planning contract, an airport feasibility study; and an economic modeling and business analysis.

The infrastructure improvements needed to implement the Reuse Master Plan include:

- Replace/upgrade existing sanitary sewers and pump stations
- Replace/upgrade existing water mains
- Replace existing electric distribution system with underground facilities
- Upgrade existing telecommunications infrastructure
- Extend all utilities to provide access for planned future development
- Install utility metering at points-of-use
- Provide storm drainage facilities for new development
- Implement measures to enhance surface water quality in the vicinity
- Remove existing steam tunnels

Over 1,500 acres (49 percent) of the site are dedicated to open space and natural areas, where wetlands, drainage-ways, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive natural systems are prevalent. Urban parks and formal open spaces are envisioned in the more developed areas, with pedestrian linkages to ensure connectivity not only throughout the property, but also into the adjacent neighborhoods and community. This approach promotes the concept of conservation and preservation of site and area-wide natural systems, while also providing a variety of locations and conditions for both active and passive recreational activities.

#### **Topsham Reuse Vision**

Reuse of the Topsham Annex provides opportunities for economic, residential housing, and parks/recreation development. With 74 acres of prime real estate nestled within the village of Topsham, the Annex is well suited for residential use and/or neighborhood retail, office, or civic uses, especially given its location near two schools.

The spirit of the Reuse Master Plan is based on connecting the Annex to the rest of the community - both physically, in terms of integrating the site's future land uses with the adjacent educational and residential areas and providing good connectivity between them, and culturally by providing an environment in which students, seniors, and Topsham citizens of all ages can interact.

#### Reuse Impacts

The projected economic and market impacts of implementing the Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan are:

- Total on-site jobs of 125 225 workers
- 60,000 80,000 square feet of non-residential redevelopment space
- Non-residential tax base creation of \$3 million \$6 million
- Up to 235 new residential dwelling units
- Residential tax base as high as \$50 million
- On-site residential population estimated at 450 700

#### Property Assets

- Easily accessible from Interstate295 and U.S. Route 1
- Serviced by natural gas, public water, sewer, and three-phase electricity
- Located in a designated growth area

#### Land Use Districts

The plan divides the Annex into four distinct areas - the Military Triangle, the undeveloped portion on the western side of the Housing Area, existing residential area south of Can Am Drive, and the existing residential area north of Can Am Drive.

Business and Community - 14 acres commonly referred to as the Military Triangle.

- Mix of office, commercial, retail, light industrial uses
- · Community and civic uses such as governmental, cultural, human services and educational functions

#### Parks and Recreation - 14 acres

 Mix of active and/or passive recreation and open space uses that are coordinated with and complement the adjacent athletic facilities owned by School Administrative District 75

#### Housing Area - Medium Density - 31 acres at the northern part of the Housing Area (north of Can Am Drive)

- Density allows for up to four residential units per acre
- Single family detached dwellings and/or two-family attached homes.

#### Housing Area - Higher Density - 15 acres at the southern part of the Housing Area (south of Can Am Drive)

- Density allows for up to eight residential units per acre
- Multi-family attached housing such as apartments, town homes, or condominiums

#### Studies completed and/or utilized by BLRA and TLRA

- Airport Feasibility Study (February 2007)
- The Impact of the BRAC Ordered Closure of the Brunswick Naval Air Station: A Regional Community Audit; and Strategic Implications for the Coastal Economy, Businesses and Workers (March 2006)
- Understanding the Impact: Closing Naval Air Station Brunswick Maine State Planning Office (January 2007)
- Marketing Report (November 2007)
- Community Survey (May 2007)
- Public Engagement Plan workshops, bus tours, public hearings
- Report on the Homeless in Midcoast Maine
- Skills Transferability Analysis and Occupational Profiles for NASB State Department of Labor Regional Workforce Analysis (April 2006)
- BRAC Preparedness Strategy: Prepared for the Town of Brunswick, Maine (June 2006)

#### Studies completed or underway by MRRA:

- Brunswick Energy Center Feasibility Study (begins October 2009)
- Housing Strategic Plan (to be completed July 2009)
- Airport Master Plan (to be completed October 2009)
- Operations Plan (to be completed October 2009)
- Research on Investment (Aviation Business Research) (completed April 2009)

## **Homeless Submission**

#### **Brunswick**

Using information provided from both area homeless service providers and Maine State Housing Authority, a report entitled *Report on the Homeless in Midcoast Maine* was created to assist the BLRA in understanding the scope of homeless needs in the area of BNAS. The report estimated that the unmet homeless gap in the vicinity of the base is a range of four to 14 supportive housing units and access to supportive services.

Three Notice of Interest (NOI) applications were received from area homeless service providers in response to BLRA's February 2006 request to 164 area homeless service providers. In June 2007, the BLRA Board authorized the Homeless and Housing Committee and staff to negotiate a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) with Tedford Housing of Brunswick, Maine. Tedford Housing is the primary provider of shelter and services to the homeless in Midcoast Maine and is located in Brunswick.

The BLRA agreed to establish a homeless services trust fund to be capitalized by future base property sales/transfers or development exactions to support both housing and related services for homeless persons. The \$600,000 trust fund could be used for the following activities:

- Housing vouchers for homeless families
- The lease or purchase of permanent supportive housing units for up to eight homeless families
- Half of the wage and benefit costs of a case manager providing services to homeless families
- The wage and benefit costs of a housing attendant providing services to homeless families

HUD completed its review process and accepted BLRA's submission in April 2009.

#### **Topsham**

TLRA endorsed a funding mechanism proposed by Tedford Housing that proposes adding an additional \$86,605 to the trust fund operated by the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority for the purpose of serving the unmet need of the homeless due to domestic violence and counseling to homeless youth.

HUD completed its review process and accepted TLRA's submission in April 2009.

As part of the planning process, BLRA worked with area homeless service providers and state organizations to identify the unmet needs of the homeless in the vicinity of NASB. The "vicinity of the base" has been defined as the towns of Brunswick, Harpswell, Freeport, and Durham and all of the communities in Sagadahoc County (Arrowsic, Bath, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Georgetown, Phippsburg, Richmond, Topsham, West Bath, and Woolwich).

## **Implementation and Partnering Strategies**

#### **Severe Socio-Economic Impacts**

With the exodus of base personnel and their families, local residents will not be the only ones affected by the impacts of the base closure. The whole Midcoast region and the State will feel the effects of income and job losses. For example, as a result of the base closure, 6,000 to 6,500 jobs will be lost, \$370 million in personal income will be lost, and Maine will see a decline in population of 6,800 to 7,400 residents.

As part of the overall planning effort, economic and market analyses revealed several potential land use opportunities and key market segments or clusters that are viable for redevelopment at the NASB site. Some of those opportunities include:

- Aviation and Aerospace
- Alternative Energy Development
- Information Technology
- Advanced Composites
- Education
- Resort Hotel and Conference Center

Developing these industry sectors will capitalize on the existing facilities and infrastructure, honing in on the strengths that already exist and skills of the existing workforce for economic development in the region.

#### **Property Vacancies**

The withdrawal of 2,000+ households from – and the introduction of 702 apartments into – the private housing market will have an adverse consequences for a region already struggling with economic challenges. To complicate matters, NASB has the only privatized housing asset that has become subject to decommissioning under BRAC. In 2004, the Navy entered into a partnership with GMH Military Housing pursuant to the privatization of military housing units on seven bases throughout the Northeastern U.S. As a result of this partnership, the Navy conveyed its interest in the NASB housing units subject to a 50-year ground lease, with 45 years remaining. A consultant was hired to develop a NASB Housing Strategy that would guide MRRA in its efforts to confront these challenging housing issues. Key recommendations suggested for implementation include:

- A focused strategy to accelerate progress towards market equilibrium by:
  - o Selective demolition of 239+/- functionally obsolescent units

- Aggressive marketing to first-time home buyers, commuters, and price-sensitive retirees who previously may have been unable to access housing in the Midcoast due to affordability constraints
- Reconfiguration of each of the seven neighborhoods into smaller sub-neighborhoods able to respond to emerging market niches, including first-time homebuyers, retirees, co-housing communities, etc.
- Implementation of a series of public and private investments in community-centric design carefully staged to capitalize on existing portfolio strengths (e.g., excellent site plans, spacious unit configuration, open space, etc.) and eliminate more limiting characteristics (e.g. uniformity of design, etc.)
- Consolidation of the fee interest in land and leasehold improvements, and the subsequent creation of mixed-income, mixed-tenure communities with a long-term stake in the future of Brunswick and Topsham
- Ownership or control over the short-term disposition and reuse of the portfolio by a well-capitalized entity with the capabilities and commitment to balance community objectives with private gain
- Implementation of hig- quality asset management systems, particularly in the early stages of redevelopment
  when vacancies and resident turnover are most likely and the market image of the developments most
  vulnerable

#### **Business Attraction Efforts**

Despite the challenge of very limited state and federal grant sources to fund business attraction activities, MRRA has been able to creatively conduct market research activities to determine what industries are most likely to locate at the redeveloped NASB. MRRA has concentrated its initial market research on the aviation industry.

In addition, MRRA participated in a European trade mission that focused on international companies and the alternative energy industry in Maine. To date, MRRA has been in contact with close to 50 companies that expressed interest in locating at the redeveloped NASB.

#### **Energy Costs and Sustainability**

In order to address both the need for affordable renewable energy sources and the replacement of approximately 6,000 lost jobs due to the base closure, MRRA is working on the creation of a renewable energy center. The Brunswick Renewable Energy Center (BREC) at NASB is envisioned to be the home of a world-renowned energy complex for integrated research and development, manufacturing, testing, business incubation, and productive operation of green energy technology products and services. The BREC will establish and grow a new energy technology cluster in Maine with the opportunity to produce power locally with local and state labor and skills. This will allow energy-procurement revenues to stay within the local economy while drastically reducing carbon and pollutant emissions. BREC will create new and sustainable employment opportunities, i.e. "green collar" jobs for Maine.

The BREC Feasibility Study began in October 2009 with grants from the Economic Development Administration and the Maine Technology Institute.

#### **Property Conveyance Issues**

One of the more complex issues facing MRRA is the timely and cost-effective conveyance of properties.

*Airport* – Like many of the challenges facing MRRA, obtaining the airport through a PBCis complex. Two major issues have emerged as challenges:

- FAA states that MRRA will need to show additional financial capacity to support the airport at NASB.
- FAA is requiring a geodata survey to be completed before MRRA can operate the Instrument Landing System. The Navy conducted a geodata survey approximately two years ago. MRRA will try to get the Navy's survey to satisfy FAA's requirements.

MRRA will continue to work closely with the Navy and FAA in order to obtain the airport complex for redevelopment by early spring, 2010.

*Economic Development Conveyance* – MRRA is preparing a property conveyance strategy to promote the rapid and successful redevelopment of NASB. It is expected that the plan will be presented to the Navy in November 2009.

#### **Community Engagement on Environmental Remediation**

MRRA participates on the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), which meets quarterly, working with RAB partners to move the cleanup process forward. MRRA also participates in more frequent technical meetings with RAB partners. Both MRRA and RAB share the goal of ensuring that cleanup is carried out to a level that is protective of human health and the ecosystem. MRRA is also working to assure that cleanup solutions match the redevelopment goals outlined in the Reuse Master Plan. This collaborative partnership is making significant progress and as a result, NASB was one of three installations to receive the prestigious Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Environmental Award for FY 2008. The highly collaborative nature of the RAB partnership was cited as a primary reason for the success of the cleanup effort.

In addition to participation in RAB meetings, MRRA recently began holding regular meetings with the Brunswick Area Citizens for a Safe Environment (BACSE), a non-profit citizens' group that was formed to administer an EPA grant that ensures citizen involvement in the clean-up. MRRA staff and BACSE volunteers share many of the same concerns regarding safeguarding the health of humans and the environment, but are working through the most appropriate way to manage, or abate environmental contamination issues. MRRA staff has also reached out to the public on environmental remediation efforts through sharing information in regular newsletters, monthly board meetings, and on the MRRA website (<a href="https://www.mrra.us">www.mrra.us</a>).

MRRA developed an environmental remediation strategy that has been shared with RAB members and has been discussed at length with Navy officials. Several meetings have taken place in which MRRA and Navy staff have discussed cleanup goals and set environmental remediation priorities. With the guidance of MRRA's Environmental Committee, MRRA staff will be meeting with Navy officials and regulatory agencies in the fall of 2009 to begin negotiating the disposition of Navy properties and environmental cleanup.

The work of successfully redeveloping the closing Navy base depends upon fostering a cooperative working relationship with various partners. MRRA is fortunate to be working with a group of knowledgeable, skilled, and thoughtful partners. Each organization brings to the table experience and perspective that strengthens NASB's redevelopment efforts. Currently, our partners include:

- OEA providing significant financial support
- DECD providing the local match to leverage OEA funds
- Towns of Topsham and Brunswick adopting zoning ordinances
- Maine Congressional Delegation monthly meetings with MRRA staff to guide and stay abreast of NASB
- BRAC Transition Office providing information, history, tours, guidance on facilities and property transfer issues
- State of Maine, Office of the Governor, Maine Department of Transportation support for seeking funding for transportation improvement planning
- Maine State Legislature and Governor putting together an \$8 million bond package request in support of redevelopment of NASB
- Maine Technology Institute and the Economic Development Administration funding a renewable energy feasibility study
- U.S. Department of Labor, Maine Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community
  Development providing funds for training, job creation and retention for supply side/demand side
  development of information technology industry
- MaineHousing providing local match for NASB Housing strategy
- FAA and Maine Department of Transportation support and engagement of the aviation feasibility study and airport master plan

## Successes/Lessons Learned

#### Public Engagement Program – Brunswick

The successful creation of Reuse Master Plans for NASB and its annex in Topsham was the result of extensive public outreach by both BLRA and TLRA. Recognizing the important role that NASB plays in the regional economy and its close relationship to the Brunswick community, the NASB reuse master planning effort was structured to include a comprehensive series of public meetings, workshops, and surveys. The public engagement programs were designed to be open and inclusive, interactive and creative, informative and meaningful and, most importantly, responsive. BLRA held several public meetings, bus-to-base tours, topical issue seminars, and a smart growth design workshop. In addition, BLRA conducted a community survey of over 400 randomly selected residents from Brunswick and surrounding towns, focusing on the public's familiarity with NASB redevelopment activities. BLRA's public engagement plan also included a number of other public outreach efforts through the duration of the 18-month base reuse planning process. Many of these activities take place with the MRRA as well. Some of these additional efforts included:

- Articles and editorials in the local newspapers
- Electronic newsletters
- Community and business group presentations
- Frequently updated Web site
- Press releases and newspaper inserts
- Bulletins and meeting coverage on cable TV channels
- Posters for shop windows announcing meetings and workshops
- Ongoing communications with local community organizations
- Periodic editorial board meetings with local newspapers

#### **Public Engagement Program – Topsham**

The public participation program in Topsham was designed to allow people to engage in the reuse planning process in a variety of ways and to demonstrate a concerted outreach effort to Topsham citizens. In addition to the public meetings,, TLRA's public engagement program included meetings and interviews with stakeholders; a project website; frequent communication with citizens by email, letter, or telephone; displays at the Topsham Public Library; TLRA meetings shown on local cable TV; and presentations to community organizations.

#### Maine Advanced Technology and Engineering Campus (MATEC)

The University of Maine and Southern Maine Community College plan to enter into a collaborative venture at the redeveloped NASB to develop the MATEC. The goal of the campus will be to serve as a higher education and R&D magnet to attract new industries and support current businesses in the mid coast region of Maine. The focus will be precision manufacturing, advanced energy systems, ship/boat building and composites.

#### Airport Master Plan

With aviation incorporated into the Reuse Master Plan, MRRA is about to complete an Airport Master Plan in accordance with FAA criteria and standards to assure that the airport is included in the Maine State Aviation Systems Plan and the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems. The Airport Master Plan will include the development of an Airport Layout Plan and an Airport Capital Improvement Plan. MRRA will plan to accept a PBC transfer of the airfield from FAA in June 2010. Airport consultants are finalizing business development scenarios to inform the Master Layout Plan. An airport PBC is scheduled to be submitted in November 2009.

#### **Base Housing Strategy**

Because of the complicated privatized housing arrangement that exists at NASB, a comprehensive disposal strategy is needed to assure the smoothest possible transitioning of the 702 military housing units into the civilian residential housing market. To that end, MRRA engaged the services of a housing consultant that worked with a task force of state and regional housing organizations and stakeholders to develop a disposition strategy for the privatized housing.

#### **Operations Plan**

MRRA is working on a comprehensive Operations Master Plan that will incorporate: public infrastructure needs; infrastructure investments with cost modeling and phasing; project financing; development phasing; market absorption rates; real estate sales and lease management strategies; and general operating costs under the rubric of a general property disposition strategy for NASB and its annex in Topsham. The Plan will have three critical components:

- Master Infrastructure Plan
- Comprehensive Disposition Strategy
- Business Plan for future property management

This plan will lead to the development of a Property Disposition Plan and discussions with the Navy on potential economic development conveyances.

#### **BRAC Information Technology (IT)**

MRRA is partnering with State and regional workforce development organizations to:

- · Assist secondarily impacted workers with basic and advanced training for future IT jobs
- Generate interest in the business community about locating IT jobs in Maine

MRRA's role is to analyze the IT systems at NASB that could serve civilian IT network needs. The analysis found that the three greatest IT assets at NASB are also the most important systems for IT companies. They are: the single mode fiber optic network, the Avaya Definity switch and the Point of Presence for telephone switching. MRRA has held a number of meetings with local telecommunication providers to integrate their system expansion plans into the large fiber optic network on base. MRRA has also met with economic development partners and interested companies on business opportunities. The next steps for MRRA will be to identify and assess the telecommunications infrastructure in the region and work with potential business prospects.

#### **BREC**

MRRA was granted funds from the Maine Technology Institute, with additional funds granted from the Economic Development Administration in August 2009, to conduct a feasibility study on the proposed BREC). BREC will be the home of a business complex and living laboratory for integrated research and development, manufacturing, testing, company incubation and productive operation of green energy technology products and services. MRRA is currently seeking a Clean Technology Manager to coordinate the activities of the Renewable Energy Center Feasibility Study. The study began in October 2009.

The closing of NASB is both a challenge and an opportunity. MRRA has learned that creativity, flexibility, strong partnerships, and patience are key components to mitigating the negative base closure impacts with successful redevelopment. While the base closure announcement was devastating, there is good news. In time and with diligent and thoughtful planning, we are hopeful that the redeveloped base properties can result in an even more robust economy.