### BASE REALIGNIMENT AND CLOSURE

# Community Profile

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# Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, Kansas

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#### Closure at a Glance

#### Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

Planning LRA: Great Plains Development Authority (GDPA)
Implementation LRA: Kansas Army Ammunition Plant Local Redevelopment Planning
Authority

#### Geographic area affected by closing:

Southeast Kansas and neighboring counties of Missouri and Oklahoma.

Population of affected area (before closure): 220,000

Total Acres to be Disposed: 13,727 acres

**Estimated Job Loss Impact:** 

Jobs Lost	
Military Personnel	0
Civilian Personnel	8
Contractors	328

Source: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)
Commission Report and Plant Operator

#### **Economic Adjustment Challenges**

- Create job growth in one of the three poorest counties in Kansas
- Create tax base for the community with the largest population in the county Labette County has the highest property tax rate in Kansas for populations over 10,000
- Attract good-paying jobs that help compensate for the lost jobs, which paid an average of more than 50 percent above the county average
- Modernize an aging infrastructure system that dates back to 1941

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

3/09/06	rederal Surplus Determination
9/15/06	LRA Homeless Outreach Completed
10/30/07	Reuse Plan Received by Department of Housing and Urban Development
	(HUD)/Military Service
12/19/09	HUD Determination on Submission
11/04/08	National Environmental Protection Act Record of Decision
12/31/09	Base Closure

# Organization

The Local Redevelopment Planning Authority (LRPA) was formalized by the Labette County Commission in October 2005 following five months of a volunteer group working with the Army. The LRPA was comprised of city and county officials, as well as community leaders. This body hired an executive director, who then hired an office manager and deputy director.

The GPDA, the implementation LRA, was established by the County Commission as directed by state statute. According to a county resolution, the GDPA's Board of Directors was populated, by appointment, with leaders within the community. Recommendations for these appointments were made by the GPDA executive director with the goal of creating a well-rounded professional and balanced board. Member professions range from the banking and insurance arenas to the transportation and agriculture industries. It was determined that elected officials are not eligible for appointment. However three ex-officio members are appointed to the board, representing county government, the Kansas Department of Commerce, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP).

### Reuse Plan/Other Studies

The Kansas Army Ammunition Plant is a 13,727-acre facility located in rural Kansas and has always been utilized for "pack and load" production rather than manufacturing of explosives. Because of the usage, it required Quantity Distance Arcs far larger than the actual production areas. The majority of the acreage (88 percent) is free of contamination. Nearly 100 percent of the plant grounds are under agricultural leases for haying, pasture, and cropland.

The Master Redevelopment Plan was completed and submitted to the Army in August 2007. The recommended key land uses are Conservation and Agriculture, Commercial Energetics and Munitions Storage, Industrial/Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, Energy Parks, Public Education and Training, Office/Business Parks, Housing, and Hazardous Materials Treatment. In addition, a comprehensive infrastructure study was recommended to modernize the infrastructure systems.

The Master Redevelopment Plan provides for 4,000 acres to be acquired by the current munitions manufacturer. In this downsized footprint, the company will continue to seek contracts at competitive bid and through third-party companies. It also plans to diversify its operations.

The plant has long provided a protective habitat for white-tail deer – it is ranked the seventh best location in the country for hunting opportunities. The protective habitat, and the many riparian corridors and wetlands unique to Kansas, has resulted in strong interest from the KDWP. To capitalize on the hunting/tourism opportunities, 3,000 acres will be sold to KDWP through an Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) transfer directly from the Army as well as an indirect sale through the GPDA. The 6,737 acres of remaining land will be developed into heavy and light industrial parcels, agribusiness and agritourism sites, office space, and residential property.

Although the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant is located in rural Kansas, it is also located in the center of the United States. The GPDA has already acquired commitment from the Union Pacific Railroad to continue service for the new industrial park and its 33 miles of rail. Inland barge is available from the Port of Catoosa, just 60 miles south by rail, with access to all eastern waterways. The nearest interstate highway system is 58 miles to the southeast; however, 28 miles of that will be a 4-lane road within the next 10 years. The remaining distance is a portion of the No. 3 route listed on the U.S. Congressional High Priority Corridor Study.

Most beneficial for the community, with its decision to acquire significant acreage in this rural area, was the completion of an "Existing Conditions Assessments" and "Infrastructure Master Plan." The ammunition plant and most of its infrastructure was built in 1941. Like many closed bases, the plant now suffers from an aging water and wastewater system. The geographical location of utility lines does not necessarily fit in corridors that would be expected; and the 106 miles of roads, bridges, and culverts are not all in the best condition. The above-referenced reports helped staff and

the Board of Directors better understand the magnitude of the problems, and determine the best approach to developing the property to with access to limited capital improvement dollars. Other in-depth studies included:

- Existing Explosives Safety Conditions
- Existing Land Management Conditions

Request for Proposals (RFPs) were recently sent out for other studies that will help align this 22 square-mile site with the surrounding countryside and Labette County. An RFP was created to address a federal enclave, which existed at the time of state-mandated 911 addressing. The RFP will address grounds that weren't included in the studies as well as provide recommendations for incorporating the area into the county's firefighting and law enforcement systems. Another RFP addresses utility easements and zoning recommendations.

### **Homeless Submission**

The Kansas Army Ammunition Plant has been a production facility since its establishment and has no housing opportunities nor personnel support system, base exchange, gym, or hospital. Because this rural property is remote from any metropolitan area, the HUD-required documentation of need and potential were not a significant portion of the transfer process. There were no Notices of Interest from homeless providers.

# Implementation and Partnering Strategies

The Kansas Army Ammunition Plant is located in the poorest region of the state. The nearest and largest community in the county (Parsons, population 12,000) has the highest property taxes in the state (for populations more than 10,000). The focus of the GPDA board is to rebuild jobs, return nearly 14,000 acres to the tax rolls of the county, and improve the valuation of the property through development. The GPDA has worked hard to retain the private munitions contractor as the first tenant of the new industrial park so that it can rebuild its talented work force. As the property transfers, there is considerable opportunity to use the company's as-yet unemployed skilled workers to attract other industry.

Environmental remediation is expected to provide several dozen jobs for up to a decade. In addition to the economic benefit of those jobs, remediation is planned to take place in the most promising areas for development first, leaving the more remote locations for later in the process.

The local community college will be a significant partner in the environmental process, which anticipates providing certification course work for local residents so that they can perform hazardous and explosive material decontamination. The community college is also establishing a nationally-certified Heavy Equipment Operators (HEO) school on the plant grounds. The extensive road network, terracing needs, and building opportunities will provide direct hands-on experience for students, and provide the GPDA with low-cost graders, dozers, and other necessary equipment. The community college will also investigate partnering the HEO School with a diesel mechanics school. This would allow the community college to provide service to its own equipment and potentially provide diesel engine service for other park tenants.

The City of Parsons is a probable partner in the near future. The aging water system at the base has many needs and operators constantly struggle to meet state standards – primarily because of the limited flow through over-sized water mains. Parsons already has a water main within two miles of the base. By extending the main to the base, with a meter on the border, the GPDA would be able to sell potable water to park tenants. The GPDA could convert the existing water system into a non-potable system for industrial purposes, which would eliminate the need to maintain an expensive potable water system and provide tenants with a dual water system to help contain their costs. This plan would also provide non-potable water through the fire hydrant system.

The State of Kansas has already been a strong partner on many levels. The acquisition of 3,000 acres for public lands will provide a tourism attraction for hunters and nature-lovers. KDWP will also provide land management recommendations and agricultural lease management in exchange for use of undeveloped property. The Kansas

Legislature has provided \$750,000 for new entrance roads to the industrial park, as well as attractive signage to welcome visitors and occupants. Necessary legislation was also passed to allow the GPDA to dispose of property in the same manner as industrial parks in municipal areas. Finally, the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) has taken a personal interest in the transfer by providing GPDA staff with an audience of its national and international representatives. The secretaries of both the KDWP and KDOC were appointed ex-officio board members to the GPDA board of directors.

### Successes/Lessons Learned

#### **Lessons Learned**

Getting off to the correct start with the Army was a critical first step for the community. Local volunteers were the first of all the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) communities to arrive at the Pentagon. They asked officials what they needed to do to move forward, rather than objecting to the inevitable. Hiring an experienced executive director very early in the process was critical approach to prevent volunteer burnout and frustration.

Creating the LRA board as a non-political, business-oriented entity was a success on multiple levels. Appointing professional business people, who have a financial investment in the community, provided a strong determination to succeed. The LRA board:

- Provided the business acumen needed to both transition and rebuild
- Did what was necessary, even when unpopular, rather than dwelling on re-election concerns
- Provided an extremely balanced professional base with which staff could interact

The community also learned it is important to mitigate issues between the regulators (state and federal) immediately. Successfully seeking political intervention will move the project forward in a timely manner. Lastly, it is important to know and understand both state and congressional politics to avoid delays and better ensure progress.

#### Successes

2/12/06	LRPA recognized by the Department of Defense
5/02/06	Army Site Assessment Report complete
8/31/07	Comprehensive Master Redevelopment Plan submitted to the Army and HUD
6/12/08	Public officials briefing hosted nearly 100 people from throughout southeast Kansas and attracted area
	media
6/30/08	Footprint was successfully negotiated with munitions manufacturer which remain as first tenant
9/19/08	Business Plan and Implementation Strategy completed
11/03/08	Implementation LRA was created by Resolution
12/03/08	Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) formally recognized Implementation LRA
5/08/09	Economic Development Conveyance submitted
5/27/09	Senate Bill 60 signed by Governor, allowing GPDA the ability to sell property without public bid
9/30/09	First 3,600 acres transferred
12/31/09	Final 6,100 acres expected to transfer