

GREAT PLAINS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Winter 2009

NEWSLETTER

OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES GALORE

Locals have long heard that some of the best hunting and fishing in Kansas is located at the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant. Now that more than 3,000 acres of the West and South part of the property will be transferred to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the intrigue has stirred excitement, conversations and speculation.

Two events were scheduled late in 2008 to help capture the magnitude of what will beckon visitors.

First, a fall photo shoot was set up by Parsons tourism director Jim Zaleski with local professional photographer Max Good.

Parsons was listed as the No.7 best white tail deer hunting place in the United States by Outdoor Life magazine and Zaleski wanted to take advantage of the fall season to get photos to use in marketing for the coming year.

Zaleski, Good and GPDA CEO Dan Goddard dressed out in camos for a couple days



Photo by Max Good

and tramped the brush to see what could be found. Numerous deer were shot with the lens of Good's camera, as were enough turkeys to feed the entire county.

Photos of coyotes, Canada Geese, majestic trees and open prairie later joined a lineup on Good's film.

Less than a month later Wichita Eagle sports reporter/photographer Michael Pearce rolled into town and met with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks public lands supervisor Lance

Hedges and Goddard. This time the focus was directed to the 3,000-plus acres that KDWP will acquire this summer.

The result of that visit was a great story in the Eagle — which caught statewide attention — pointing out the variety of outdoor opportunities that will be available after transfer.

So how will public access be provided after transfer?

KDWP is still determining how it wants to handle hunting opportunities since its property will abut an active ammunition plant.

Even determining how to provide access is a project of

its own, since much of the plant will necessarily have to be secured to restrict access to contaminated buildings.

While it is known that the security gates won't be thrown open on the day of transfer, efforts are underway to figure out how to accommodate the public, whether birders, fishermen, hunters or nature lovers as quickly as possible.

John Q. Public may have to wait a little longer than he would like to get in, but the wait promises to be worth it.



Courtesy of Wichita Eagle



SCOTT ROAD WORK BEGINS SOON

Scott Road, on the north side of the plant at Gate #3, will become the new entrance to the Great Plains Industrial Park. Fortunately the funding to improve that entrance was secured during last

year's legislative session, and engineering work is well underway.

The plan is for a total rebuild of the existing road bed with an 8-inch asphalt overlay. The lane widths will be 12-feet,

bordered by 8-foot turf shoulders. The road will be striped.

Special vertical signage will be erected in the median of the entrance at Main St. to direct traffic into the new industrial park. The signage will be complemented with landscaping and lighting.

Construction is expected to begin in April and the road will be closed to all but local traffic. Guard sheds and barriers will be removed from the road and gate access will be rerouted to Gate #1 off of Southern/23000 Rd. Gate #3 will not reopen until after the Army's mission is complete.

The parking area inside Gate #3 will be rebuilt and additional signage will be added to that area.

Since the cost of oil has dropped so dramatically, it also appears that the long-abandoned portion of Southern Blvd., inside the boundary, can also be rebuilt and repaved, giving the industrial park two inviting entrances.

Scott Road Project Sequence

Anticipated start April 2009

1. Move security guard house from Gate 3 to Gate 1
2. Reopen Gate 1 for all plant traffic, using entrance on South side of Southern Ave
3. Close Scott Rd to all but local traffic
4. Mill and remove road base, putting millings on back parking area at Gate 3 to Gate 1
5. Rebuild road to 12' lanes and 8' turf shoulders to include 8" overlay and stripes; pave parking
6. Rebuild, pave and stripe 10' lanes as far east as additional funding will go



TALL COTTON

Great Plains' CEO Dan Goddard found himself in Washington D.C., offering testimony to Senate Arms Committee staff about the appropriateness of rural BRAC sites being transferred to local organizations for no cost.

Goddard, a former long-time board member of the Association of Defense Community's (ADC) organization, was asked to participate based on his experience in Labette County during this BRAC round, as well as his experience in Indiana during the last BRAC round when no-cost

transfers were acceptable.

While there are plenty of stories about oceanfront Navy property having been developed into multi-million dollar condominiums — with nothing going into government coffers during the process — rural areas like Labette County are in another category.

ADC is a nationwide organization designed to help communities navigate the challenges of the BRAC process. Goddard's invitation to present evidence on ADC's behalf, to such a prestigious group, put the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant directly in the forefront for the day.

FROM THE PAST



Norma Bennett was a recipient of the "Suggestion Award" October 6, 1969. She is pictured here in Building 1109.

FROM PLANNING TO DOING



From left to right: Pete Rhodes, Steve Lewis, Bob Wood, Dan Peterson, James McCarty, Carolyn Kennett, George Knox, Gary Beachner, and Montie Taylor. Standing with her back to camera: Labette County Clerk Linda Schreppel.

The process is slower than locals could ever have imagined, but in November, a major step was taken. Governance of moving the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant to local ownership has now been passed to the Great Plains Development Authority (GPDA), known in the BRAC world as a Local Redevelopment Authority.

With the unanimous vote of the Labette County Commission, the GPDA was empowered and a board of local volunteers has been sworn into office.

The step is a significant one in the process of transfer since it is the GPDA that will submit the Economic Development Conveyance application to the U.S. Army.

Accepting such a challenge underlines the enormous commitment of the local volunteers, most of whom have devoted countless hours toward the process over nearly a four-year period.

Chairman of the new board is James McCarty, McCarty Office Machines; vice-chair is Bob Wood, Jr., Wood-Dulohery Insurance and Real Estate; secretary/treasurer is Montie Taylor, TeamBank.

Other members of the board are: Gary Beachner, Beachner Grain; Carolyn Kennett, City of Parsons; Dr. George Knox, Labette Community College; Steve Lewis, Realty, Inc; Dan Peterson, retired agricultural instructor; and Pete Rhodes, co-owner Wichita Southeast Kansas Transit.

The GPDA will meet the second and fourth Thursday, each month, at 8 a.m. in the Commission room of the Parsons Municipal Building. The public is encouraged to attend.



SHHHH ...

While the Great Plains Industrial Park isn't yet open for business and is hardly in a position to actively recruit occupants, that doesn't mean there isn't interest.

Two nationally-known heavy hitters have approached staff about possible projects and one of them has flown in for a visit twice now.

Who knows what the possibilities are.

Ex-Os

Three people have been added to the GPDA's board of directors as ex-officios. Their function will be to add specific expertise to the board. All are appointed to one-year terms.

Joining the board in January are:

Brian Kinzie is the chairman of the Local Redevelopment Planning Authority which paved the way for the GPDA to be recognized by the Pentagon. Kinzie, a Labette County commissioner and local businessman, has devoted thousands of hours to the BRAC process and his appointment will provide continuity in the transfer.

Lance Hedges is the public lands supervisor for the Kan-



Ex-officio members from left to right: Brian Kinzie, Craig VanWey and Lance Hedges.

sas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Not only will the Department pare off more than 3,000 acres of KSAAP for public access, but it will also work with the GPDA on land management and other issues. Hedges was appointed to the position by Secretary Mike Hayden.

Craig VanWey is the project manager of business development for Southeast Kan-

sas, and is the appointee of Kansas Department of Commerce Secretary David Kerr. VanWey, who is a native Parsonian, has already been involved in some of the projects concerning the plant.

While ex-officios have no voting power, their voices will provide a much broader dimension to the board, as well as statewide representation.

RUMORS, RUMORS ...

Have you ever stopped to think how much time you spend tracking down rumors and providing factual information to counter stories that seem to spread on their own? Have you ever played the game where a message is given to one person and that person verbally tells another person the message and so on until the message doesn't resemble the original message?

For example: "Today you may hear explosions at the Plant. The explosions are the result of the controlled demolition of obsolete munitions." Next, "I heard explosions out at the Plant today; they must be blowing up bombs." Next, "I heard some bombs blew up out at the Plant today. I wonder if they were in one of those trucks from McAlester down in Oklahoma." Finally, "I heard a truck load of bombs from McAlester exploded out at the Plant."

We actually had a question about the truckload of bombs from McAlester exploding at the plant during a recent public meeting. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Then there is the one about the semi-truck full of tools buried at the plant. And did you hear that atomic weapons used in World War II were actually built at the plant? Oh by the way, did you hear that all the ponds at the plant have old bombs and artillery shells that were just dumped in them?

Well, I can tell you an exhaustive environmental assessment has not indicated any of the above is true. In fact, the KSAAP is probably the most studied location in Southeast Kansas. Yes, some contamination has been identified and will be cleaned up under the watchful eyes of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). This cleanup is the responsibility of the US Army; and if anything is discovered in the future that

occurred while the plant was under Army ownership, the Army is responsible for coming back and completing the cleanup. This includes environmental and explosive contamination.

Let's put the common sense test to the Great Plains Development Authority's (GPDA) approach to the environmental condition of the Great Plains Industrial Park (GPIP). First, it is in the best interest of the GPDA and the community to have a thorough understanding of any encumbrances, environmental or otherwise, affecting the future development of the GPIP. Second, the GPDA is intent on ensuring the cleanup of the property is done right the first time, under the oversight of the EPA and KDHE. Finally, the GPDA will continue to be sensitive to environmental concerns during the entire development process.

You know, I kind of like rumors. I can use them when I write my book about all the crazy things I have heard that are not based on fact. However, it is too bad rumors sometimes overshadow all the great work that is being done to prepare for the development of the GPIP on the part of the Army, EPA, KDHE, and our community.

Send any rumors you hear to dgoddard@parsonsk.com. I need material for that book.

FROM THE CEO'S DESK



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