

JOB FORECASTING / DEFENSE GRANTS

Prior to 1995 Florida, unlike other states, had not provided any financial assistance to local communities to help them protect military bases located in their areas from fence line encroachment and resulting base closure. Encroachment is a primary reason for base closure. As a consequence, Florida witnessed thru preceding Base Realignment and Closure rounds (BRAC) the loss of NAS Cecil Field and a number of large military missions around the state including the Naval Depot at NAS Pensacola to other states. The negative economic impact and job loss to Florida from BRAC was staggering. Following BRAC 1995 the Florida Defense Alliance was created by the Governor and the Legislature to assist local communities in protecting their military bases from closure and jobs loss thru the Defense Grants program, specifically Defense Infrastructure Grants (DIG) and Defense Reinvestment Grants (DRG). The DIG grants in particular have helped local communities become more competitive with other states in protecting their bases from encroachment when leveraging the grant funds with DOD Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) funds at a 3 (REPI):1(local DIG) ratio to acquire land parcels and conservation easements around their bases. The primary focus of these grants has been directed at retaining the existing military and civilian jobs as well as enhancing the value of the military bases to accept new missions and growth of military related jobs in Florida. According to the University of West Florida Haas Center Report, January 2008, defense-related spending is directly or indirectly responsible for \$52 billion or 7.5% of Florida's gross state product and 732,300 direct and indirect jobs thus placing defense among the top three industries in the state. About 35 percent of Northwest Florida regional output is now driven by defense spending. As a result of the Defense Grants program, the BRAC in 2005 reflected net gains in military related jobs and missions for Northwest Florida with the decision to establish the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) training program at Eglin AFB and to transfer the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, NC to the Eglin AFB complex. Additionally, the Air Force Combat Systems Officer program was relocated from Randolph AFB, TX to NAS Pensacola in 2009 as part of BRAC. All total these mission gains resulted in the addition of some 8,000 direct military and civilian jobs and more than \$6 billion annual economic impact to the economy of NW Florida. These job numbers do not include the construction jobs created and capital investment made by the BRAC '05 decision. Just as important, the DIG grants to Santa Rosa County over the past several years has enabled the county to partner with the Navy thru the use of REPI funds match to acquire land parcels and conservation easements around NAS Whiting Field to prevent encroachment. The REPI match to date exceeds \$3.5 million with another \$3.1 million in escrow to match monies received from defense grants. The Santa Rosa County/Navy buffering program, which is considered to be "The Model" by the Navy, has also enabled Santa Rosa County to partner with the Navy and NAS Whiting Field through the development of a Limited Access Use Agreement, the first of its kind for the Navy, to enable tenants of the county-owned Whiting Aviation Park use of the taxiways and the 6,000 foot runway at NAS Whiting Field. The Aviation Park which is now under development has the potential to bring hundreds of high paying jobs to the area. Without the continued funding thru the defense grants program and the REPI match, the Whiting Aviation Park would not have been possible.

Since inception of our participation in the defense grants program in 2001, Santa Rosa County has received \$3.544 million in DIG funding from the state and another \$715, 938 in Defense Reinvestment Grants (DRG) to fund encroachment alleviation planning; perform a technical skills inventory study; an alternative use plan should NASWF close (NASWF was briefly on the closure list in BRAC '95 before it was taken off); a target market survey to identify potential businesses for the aviation park; a Master Plan for the aviation park; and consultant compensation to assist in finalizing the Limited Access Use Agreement between Santa Rosa County and the Navy for use of the runway and taxiways at NASWF in support of the Whiting Aviation Park . To date some 944 acres within one half mile of NASWF have been buffered from encroachment thru the use of the DIG grants and the REPI matching funds. Currently \$701,856 in previously approved DIG grant monies remain available to Santa Rosa County to match with approximately \$3.1 million available from DOD REPI funds. This will enable Santa Rosa County in partnership with the Navy and NASWF to continue buffering efforts to protect the base in accordance with the approved Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) recommendations which were implemented in 2003. Currently there are 2,880 military and civilian jobs at NASWF which is 300 jobs more than the reported 2580 jobs in the 2008 UWF Haas Study. The total economic impact to Santa Rosa County from the military presence is reported to be \$856.8 million and 15,000 jobs.

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