

# BRAC reuse plans approved by Red River redevelopment board

By Aaron Brand  
Texarkana Gazette

The Red River Redevelopment Authority board approved reuse plans Tuesday for the Watts-Guillot Army Reserve Center on 15th Street in Texarkana, Texas, and the more than 19,000 excess Army acres at Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant and Red River Army Depot.

The RRRRA approval of plans for the properties becoming available through the Base Realignment and Closure process signals another step toward their future redevelopment.

Duane Lavery, RRRRA executive director, presented an overview of both plans, saying RKG Associates has done its work on the reuse plan for LSAAP and RRAD property.

Red River's mission is being realigned so the depot is losing some acreage, while LSAAP is slated to close.

"It's in a state that it can be submitted," said Lavery about the reuse plan for both

bases. He said there will be public hearings and an opportunity for public input before it's submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for that agency's approval.

Lavery said it's hoped property development can ultimately create thousands of jobs.

"There is a lot of opportunity," said Lavery, noting most acreage at LSAAP will be designated for some combination of light industrial use. He said there are 51 miles of railroad infrastructure on the property.

At Red River, the 3,800 acres are generally on the western edge of RRAD and include wetlands, he said.

Discussing a market overview for LSAAP property use, Lavery said emphasis will be on industrial, manufacturing and heavy commercial use.

And he said at LSAAP it's going to be a "huge, huge project" to clean up environmental problems.

"There's a lot of contamination out

there," said Lavery, noting the characterization for the environmental agreement with the Army is ongoing.

He said what the RRRRA is seeking from the Army is "like use," meaning future use would be similar to current level industrial uses at the ammunition plant property. That would expedite the redevelopment and environmental cleanup, he said.

Lavery said the redevelopment authority is also working with the Army on a disposition strategy for the property. He said it's likely there will be multiple forms of conveyance and ways the property will be given over for future use.

One of those conveyance methods would be through public sale, which would be conducted by the Army, but the RRRRA would have input in the sale standards, said Lavery.

There's also a negotiated sale through the RRRRA whereby interested parties deal directly with the authority to buy land, buildings, utilities and cultural resources

at a site. A third type of conveyance is an economic development sale where a discount is based on job creation.

Frank Coleman, Texarkana College president, discussed the reuse plan for the Watts-Guillot Army Reserve Center as a future home for the college's construction technology program.

It's a partnership that would include at least two local school districts, he said, and give a chance for students to gain high school and college credit. He said it will also fill a need in the business community for this kind of trained work force.

Right now, 95 to 100 students are pre-registered to start the program in August, but the program may have to start and be housed elsewhere temporarily, said Coleman.

He compared the developing program to the Airframe & Power Plant School in Texarkana.

"This is a very similar project to that," said Coleman.