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## Ceremony marks start of Army Reserve Center project

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CHAMBERSBURG, Pa. — Letterkenny Army Depot formally marked the start of its \$14.9 million Army Reserve Center project Tuesday, although construction began weeks ago.

Reserve units from across southern Pennsylvania are expected to transfer personnel to the 54,224-square-foot facility when it opens in August 2010.

Funded through a federal earmark secured by U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., the center consists of a training building, an area maintenance support activity (AMSA) and an organizational maintenance shop.

Letterkenny's facility will relieve Army Reserve centers in Franklin and Adams counties that are aging, underequipped and severely overcrowded, said Maj. Gen. William Monk III, commanding general of the 99th Regional Support Command of the U.S. Army Reserve.

The Army Reserve functions differently today than it did 70 years ago, he said.

No longer a strategic reserve, it is an operational force that complements, not supplements, the Army, Monk said.

Newly restructured and reorganized, he said the Army Reserve is seeking modern facilities to train and prepare soldiers for their jobs.

As he spoke to those gathered for the ceremony Tuesday, Monk's words were punctuated by the pounding of nails and grinding of stone as contractor Lobar Inc. worked on the already-framed training building.

Letterkenny's Army Reserve Center has been more than three years in the making, Shuster said.

The project failed to receive funding the first time he sought to secure it, he said.

Shuster managed to snag \$14.9 million for the project in the 2009 appropriations bill thanks to the worldwide deployment of reservists and need for domestic reserve training facilities, he said.

Approximately five units will move to Letterkenny from centers in Greencastle, Chambersburg and Gettysburg, Monk said.

He said the units scheduled to transfer include the Headquarters Element, Army Reserve Defense Information Systems Agency; the 52nd Military History Detachment; the 630th Detachment 1 and 811th Platoon AMMO, 316th ESC; the Detachment 1, 443rd Military Police Company, 200th MP Command; and the 99th RSC AMSA 113.

Adding uniformed men and women to Letterkenny Army Depot will enhance the work atmosphere for Army civilians, Depot Commander Col. Steven Shapiro said.

“The civilian employees at Letterkenny Army Depot like to see guys running around wearing this,” he said, gesturing to his standard issue uniform. “It brings something to their job that they might not otherwise have; such as seeing the soldiers driving up and down in a Humvee might make them think more about that Humvee that they are repairing.”

Letterkenny has trained approximately five companies of about 150 soldiers each during the last two years, Shapiro said.

While that number is small, once the center is complete in 2010, the commander expected an exponential increase in the number of soldiers trained at Letterkenny, as the center will be available to more units than just those transferring to the depot.

“Our goal will be to almost every month, peak at about 300 soldiers here,” he said. “We want them to come here, do what they do in combat, but do it here, to train.”

Col. Keith Landry of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assured Shapiro, Shuster and Monk the project will be completed on schedule and on budget.

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