

March 2 2006 - Slaughter Announces \$32 Million Regional Readiness Center to be Built at NFARS

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Facility Will Secure Reserve Station's Position in Niagara Community

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today announced that the United States Army Reserve has agreed to begin work on a \$32 million Regional Readiness Center at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in 2007. The size and significance of the project, in addition to the large financial commitment the Army Reserve is making to it, suggest that any future Defense Department attempts to close the base will be extremely unlikely.

"The Center is going to bring long-term, quality jobs to the region, and make this base indispensable to the Department of Defense," Rep. Slaughter said. "This decision means a brighter future for this base, our region, and for the state of our national security."

"It's a big win for the Niagara community," Rep. Slaughter continued. "Community members worked hard to keep the base open last year, and now, we'll never have to convince another commission that our Reserve Station is vital to our national security."

"We're going to keep growing the base in the near future, including securing at least four additional plans, more missions, and greater responsibilities for the Air National Guard unit," Rep. Slaughter said. "I'm proud to know that the Reserve Base will be part of our community for a long time to come."

BACKGROUND

Rep. Slaughter was a key part of the effort to ensure the Reserve's commitment to the project. During its review of the Reserve Station last year, the BRAC Commission authorized the creation of a \$32 million Readiness facility at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. But earlier this year, the Army Reserve suggested that initial construction on the Center would be delayed until 2008. Rep. Slaughter contacted officials at the Reserve on multiple occasions and advocated for an earlier start-date for construction.

Last week, U.S. Army Reserve Chief of Installations, Colonel Danny Nobles contacted Rep. Slaughter and confirmed that the Reserve will begin work on the Center in 2007.

The Center will consolidate Army Reserve Units in the Buffalo-Niagara area and move the Army Reserve units from the commercial side of the base to the military side. Once the Center is built, the vacant Army Reserve hangar on the commercial side may be utilized for critically-needed economic development purposes. The Reserve Station is already home to the 914th Air Reserve Airlift Wing and 107th Air Guard Associate Wing, as well as the U.S. Army Military Entrance Processing Center. The Regional Readiness Center would result in the relocation of the 277th and 865th Army Reserve units to the base from their current location in a hangar on the commercial side of the airport.