

New Reserve Center to be a showplace

SHANNON MUCHMORE | Tulsa World
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The Broken Arrow facility will be the largest in the state.



Maj. Gen. Myles L. Deering, adjutant general of Oklahoma, speaks at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Armed Forces Reserve Center in Broken Arrow on Wednesday. Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Jari Askins is seated. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

Officials broke ground Wednesday morning on what will be the largest armory in the state.

The \$67 million Armed Forces Reserve Center will be at 26401 E. 101st St.

Lt. Gov. Jari Askins said at the ceremony Wednesday the building will be more than just an economic boost for the area.

"It's supporting the men and women who have dedicated themselves to this community," she said.

The 285,000-square-foot center will employ about 100 people and serve up to 1,200 members of the state's National Guard and

Reserve units every month.

Military officials have said they plan to move in late next year.

Askins said the reserve center will be a source of pride for the military.

"We want this center to be something you can hold up to recruit the men and women who will follow you," she said.

The center's construction is made possible with the cooperation of the city of Broken Arrow, Rural Water District No. 4 and the city of Coweta.

Broken Arrow will make \$150,000 in improvements to a nearby intersection, while the water district will provide sewer and water service costing about \$200,000.

Coweta will work with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to put traffic signals at another nearby intersection.

Col. Jon Lee, deputy commanding general with the 63rd Regional Support Command of the U.S. Army Reserve, said Wednesday military officials are eager to use the center.

"We appreciate all the efforts that have gone into the design of this building and we look forward to the building portion of this project," he said.

The reserve center is one of seven in the state approved as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

About 100 aging bases will be closed. Other centers are under construction in Norman, Muskogee and Mustang.

Bryan Amarel, operations manager for Hansel Phelps Construction Co. and former member of the military, told the crowd at the ceremony that this is a special project.

"Our goal as a team collectively is to deliver a world-class project," he said. "And to do that, we need a world-class group of individuals, which I believe we have on this project."