

STEPPING UP THE PACE IN REUSE

As 2007 quickly approaches, concepts and dreams are becoming reality at the former Fort Ord. The new year is poised for new homes, new jobs, new businesses, new schools, and new recreational opportunities. The past year has seen major changes for the individual reuse jurisdictions that bode well for regional support and local area improvements.

In mid-2005, the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) recognized that with portions of reuse still dependent upon completion of cleanup-related contamination from Munitions and Explosives of Concerns (MEC) on portions of the former Fort Ord, FORA could no longer wait for the federal system to gradually finish its work. The agency created a “negotiating team” to approach the U.S. Army and suggested allowing FORA to complete the cleanup activity.

Gradually those discussions are now culminating in an agreement between the FORA Board, the Army, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that provides for FORA to proceed with MEC cleanup over the next 6 years. The cleanup costs will be paid by the Army, backed by a \$70 million plus “Environmental Protection Program” insurance policy. This important action permits final transfer of lands from the Army to FORA for future development of the new homes, businesses, and jobs.

In addition to the new cleanup work in 2007, several other efforts are underway:

Marina Heights, with 1,050 new single-family homes and townhomes within the City of Marina’s portion of the former Fort Ord, is already under construction and expects to have initial housing models available for viewing by Spring 2007.

Cypress Knolls, an active adult/senior housing project with over 700 units, has been approved for development. The proposed development includes single-family units and a centralized community and activity center. New jobs include positions in construction, management and a variety of support services.

Marina University Village, a mixed-use retail, commercial and residential project is already preparing land and installing infrastructure for the construction of commercial businesses, hospitality, apartments, townhomes, and single-family residences, while creating new jobs in construction, retail, professional, hospitality, recreation, and support services for the region.

Seaside Resort is in final stages of approval for creation of commercial and business development that will provide jobs in retail, commercial, hospitality, administration, recreation, construction, and support services. The project is a hotel and golf course community with timeshare units and affordable housing in close proximity.

East Garrison, a 1,470-unit planned community within a portion of the County’s land at the former Fort Ord, will provide a mix of single-family homes, apartments, townhomes,

recreational and community areas, an artist “live-and-work” downtown residential and visitor-serving component, and neighborhood services with jobs in construction, retail, commercial, professional, and support services.

The Del Rey Oaks Resort is in final planning stages for development of a hotel resort, golf course, and residential project to include single-family homes, condominiums, townhomes, and on-site employee housing. Job creation includes positions in construction, administration, recreation, hospitality, retail, and support services.

Amidst the coming changes is an important reuse theme — environmental protection and habitat preservation for more than two-thirds of the 28,000 acres (45 square miles) of the former military training base. While the former Fort Ord served for nearly a century within California’s Monterey Bay Central Coast region, vast areas were preserved for military training which had the positive by-product of protecting habitat for several endangered species. Those protected areas now will serve as an important amenity to the economic reuse of the area.