

Schriever undergoes building boom  
Housing may be next after security upgrade  
By TOM ROEDER THE GAZETTE

Family housing could be under construction at the rapidly expanding Schriever Air Force Base within two years.

In 2007, Air Force planners expect to build 330 houses and apartments on the base, which has no housing. Congress included the housing in construction plans, but lawmakers still must authorize money for it.

In recent years, Congress has lavished construction cash on Schriever, which sits on 6.5 square miles of prairie east of Colorado Springs. The base, which opened in 1985, has broken ground on more than \$44 million in building projects in the past year.

"It's just extreme growth, and we're out here on the plains so people don't notice the growth," said Schriever's commander, Col. Suzanne Vautrinot.

The housing is likely to alleviate some of the traffic snarls around the base, where 5,200 military and civilian workers commute.

Vautrinot said having families there also will enhance a sense of community at the base.

Vautrinot and others cut the ribbon Thursday on a \$7.8 million building that demonstrates how seriously the base takes security. The 57,000-square-foot warehouse was positioned so trucks can drop off and pick up packages without venturing onto the base.

Before, delivery trucks would drop off goods near the Air Force's most sensitive space facilities. Workers at Schriever control weather, communications, navigation and missile warning satellites.

Fears of a terrorist strike that could disrupt control of those satellites, which have been crucial to directing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, prompted the new facility.

In the warehouse, items will be carefully screened for explosives, chemicals and germ weapons.

"It gives Schriever a level of security that rivals the Pentagon," said Lt. Col. Doc Langenderfer, with the 50th Space Wing.

The base has spent more than \$6 million on other security measures in the past year. Access gates were pushed to the edges of Schriever, well away from buildings, and \$1.2 million was spent on expanding a fence around the base.

Vautrinot said the development shows the important role Schriever plays in the nation's security.

"Space systems have changed how our nation fights," she said, noting how satellite-guided weapons and satellite communications have revolutionized warfare.

The growth of the mission and personnel led to an ongoing building boom.

Workers have finished a medical and dental clinic, and construction continues on a satellite operations building to house an Air Force reserve unit and a \$15 million antenna to communicate with satellites.

Construction plans include a space warfare complex, expansion of the base fitness center and an office building and training facility for security police.

"We're building for the long term," Vautrinot said.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0240 or troeder@gazette.com

MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE - GETTING STARTED Workers at Schriever Air Force Base train on X-ray equipment Thursday after the ribbon-cutting at the Secure Area Logistics Facility. The warehouse is expected to screen 4,500 packages for chemicals and explosives each month.