

## **Housing Privatization Closer to Reality at Vandenberg**

by Staff Sgt. Raymond Hoy  
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

2/6/2007 - VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- Privatization of Vandenberg's base housing is getting closer to becoming a reality as potential housing developers prepare their bids for the base's privatization contract.

The contract proposals are being firmed up after potential developers came to Vandenberg Jan. 4 to attend a housing privatization industry forum.

The forum invited more than 100 potential contract bidders to the base to outline the scope of Vandenberg's privatization project as well as some of the ground rules.

"Our goal for privatization is to turn base housing over to a developer who will upgrade the houses and then rent them back to Airmen," said Bob Griswold, 30th Civil Engineer Squadron chief architect. "The developer will lease the land from the government for a period of fifty years."

The initiative to build is due to the degradation of some of the homes and the infrastructure supporting those homes; as well as to help the military improve the quality of life for its service members by improving the condition of their housing. It also allows the Air Force to partner with private developers, who will build and maintain on-base housing units.

"The government's goal is to provide private-sector business alternatives to traditional military housing construction projects," Mr. Griswold said.

Under the tentative timetable, a contract will be awarded to a developer by December of this year.

There are currently 42 Air Force bases pursuing housing privatization options and about 76 percent of military housing is being completed through privatization.

At Vandenberg, all family housing will be privatized. Vandenberg's East Housing will not be included in the privatization contract as it has already begun the demolition process. The houses there are close to 50 years old and have been deemed unlivable. It has become too costly to continue fixing and upgrading the infrastructure supporting East Housing.

"Under the new concept, Vandenberg needs 867 military housing units," said Ricky Herman, 30th CES project manager.

These houses will include the 835 units that were built between 1995 and 2002. Part of the privatization plan will include building 164 more new units, including 150 officer units and 14 for chief master sergeants, to replace the old houses that remain in West Housing, bringing the bases total to 999 military housing units.

"Developers will include plans for the excess units in their contract proposals," Mr. Herman said.

Other items expected to be addressed are potential upgrades to the 835 units already in place.

"We are hoping the developers will be able to include different upgrades such as two car garages, increased square footage, upgraded carpet and ceiling fans," said Mr. Griswold. "We are hoping to be able to accomplish this as Airmen move out to have as little effect on families as possible."

There are also a number of potential amenities that could be included, such as a new community center.

"This initiative is a win-win situation for everyone involved, especially our military families," said Col. Jack Weinstein, 30th Space Wing commander. "We'll be able to provide top-notch housing for all of our Airmen and their families through this long-term partnership."

Renting privatized housing will be optional. Airmen will still be able to choose to live on or off base. The lease agreement will be between the military member and the private developer, with rent equaling the military member's basic allowance for housing minus a utility allowance.

"This is all about building better housing for our Air Force families quicker," Colonel Weinstein said. "Our traditional means of replacing housing throughout the Air Force by military construction takes too long and is almost impossible today. It took nearly ten years to replace the 835 units we've replaced so far. Through housing privatization, we'll finish our replacement effort in five years or less and we'll have new housing with more amenities than we would have had through the traditional means of military construction, which is always a challenge to fund due to operational priorities."

After the contract has been awarded, the selected developer will have six years to complete the construction project, as well as upgrades to houses that won't be demolished.