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Guard center expands at Davenport airport

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Barb Ickes | Posted: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 11:11 pm | (4) Comments



The Iowa National Guard Aviation Readiness Center near the Davenport Municipal Airport was rededicated on Wednesday. (FILE PHOTO)

The purpose of the sprawling aviation hangar, classrooms, offices and workout rooms is to make sure Iowa soldiers are ready to go, just as the name implies.

The Iowa National Guard Aviation Readiness Center has occupied land near the Davenport Municipal Airport for 36 years. But it has grown considerably in the past year and is set for a second growth spurt.

U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, told a group of about 100 well-wishers, soldiers, contractors and others at Wednesday's rededication of the center that helping to deliver \$1.5 million in federal funds is "some of the most important work I do."

He added, "The center is a shining example ... the Guard is ready and willing" when called upon. It is

home to elements of the 248th Aviation Support Battalion and 2-211th General Support Aviation Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard.

The \$3 million renovation of and addition to the center at 9650 Harrison St., Davenport, was finished earlier this month and was funded equally through state and federal dollars. The next phase will include full renovation of the operations section and the addition of a second floor.

Federal funding will carry the full \$2 million price tag for the operations center, which includes flight planning and aviation operations.

The work included complete renovation of the existing facility, along with the construction of an 11,000 square-foot addition housing classrooms, storage space, offices, restrooms and a kitchen, among other features.

Brig. Gen. Janet Phipps, assistant adjutant general of the Iowa Army National Guard, said the updates and improvements to the aviation-centered facility are aimed at one thing: soldier support.

She asked the dozens of soldiers at Wednesday's dedication to stand, saying, "You do something only 1 percent of the population of the United States does and that's putting on a uniform."

Col. Randy Warm, commander of the facility, characterized the work that goes on inside the Aviation Readiness Center as more than military planning.

"In Davenport, we have one big family - one big team," he said. "That's how it works here."

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