

## Introduction

Through its Grow the Force initiatives, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) anticipates significant military growth across its North Carolina installations: Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) New River, and MCAS Cherry Point. Rapid and extensive growth in military personnel will result in fundamental changes to large parts of North Carolina's "Eastern Region". The counties projected to be most affected by this growth are Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico and Pender. These changes will be driven by an influx of nearly 25,000 additional people comprised of active-duty Marines, civilian staff and family members by the end of 2011 and as many as 15,000 people indirectly associated with the Marine Corps expansion. Adding an estimated normal population growth of 21,300 brings the total expected growth to as many as 61,000 in 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Because the increase in population due to defense segment growth is imminent and is thought to be a catalyst for other growth, the Military Growth Task Force (MGTF) was created to focus on the impact of the increase in military service members in this seven-county region. The MGTF is charged with several important planning responsibilities including:

- Outline a strategic approach with the assistance of advisory committees
- Formulate goals and objectives
- Identify and analyze community gaps
- Develop a scope of work
- Identify and secure staff support
- Develop a public involvement process
- Develop a growth management strategy to address the relocation schedule
- Develop a fiscally sound capital improvements program
- Manage and monitor growth

As a part of this effort, the MGTF has organized ten advisory committees. They include:

- Communications and Government Affairs
- Schools, Education, Daycare and After-School Care
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Local Government Managers and Planners
- Medical, Health, and Social Services
- Public Safety and Emergency Services
- Quality of Life Factors and Off-base Meetings, Conventions, Hotels/Motels and Special Activities
- Transportation
- Workforce, Job Creation, and Fiscal Impacts of Increased Economic Activity

The committees were appointed to develop strategies to address the broad spectrum of issues relating to military expansion in North Carolina's Eastern Region. To initiate this process,

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a 2007 baseline

preliminary assessments were conducted across the established functional areas to assist in identifying current conditions, future impacts, and needs related to the anticipated growth. Referencing the tasks established by the MGTF for each committee, committee members collected and reviewed data related to their focus areas to assist in the assessment process; they identified and prioritized issues facing the region as a result of the pending military growth, offering recommendations related to such growth in specified key areas. Not all the identified issues were fully examined during this preliminary impact phase, but will be further addressed in the next phase of the planning process.

This report provides the preliminary assessment of the impact of the growth across the region. The preliminary impact assessment is intended to promote discussion among regional stakeholders and to provide a basis for the more detailed regional growth management plan that will be a follow-on to this effort. When this extensive planning process has been completed, the region will enjoy the results of positive state and local commitment to accommodate growth. At the same time, the MGTF is building lasting partnerships based on cooperation by all affected stakeholders utilizing a consensus course of action. Ultimately, the MGTF will clearly define an implementation strategy and follow-through with stakeholders so the military growth in the community enhances the quality of life of all citizens.

### **Sources Reviewed**

- Military Growth Task Force of North Carolina's Easter Region website (<http://www.nceastmgtf.org/about-us.html>)