

BACKGROUND



Protecting Luke Air Force Base is Critical to Arizona's Economy, National Security

One of the largest and most frequently overlooked industries in Arizona is the military. The presence of military bases, personnel and their supporting activities pre-date statehood, but is often ignored in economic development discussions. But, the fact is, the military industry is the largest employer in Arizona, employing more than 83,000 active duty, reserve and civilian employees at bases statewide.

In times of economic downturns, military installations provide unsurpassed economic stability. Luke Air Force Base (AFB) alone contributes more than 8,000 jobs and \$2.17 billion annually to our state's economy.

In recognition of the importance of the military's role in the state, Arizona has emerged as a leader and is recognized as a national model in its protection of military facilities from encroachment. This has been achieved through the passage of innovative state laws, which reflects the tremendous commitment state, local and community leaders have in protecting military installations statewide and helping ensure their future viability in Arizona.

NEXT GENERATION FIGHTER

Luke AFB has served a vital role for the U.S. Air Force for more than 65 years. Currently, the base is the Air Force's largest fighter wing and the only active duty F-16 training base in the world. The Air Force will begin replacing the F-16 within the next decade and is scheduled to completely retire the fleet by 2025.

The planned replacement for the F-16 is the F-35 Lightning II. This next generation fighter will be used by the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, as well as eight foreign militaries. Arizona has the ideal climate, land, airspace, training ranges and facilities needed to train and fly the F-35. Thus, securing the F-35 training mission is the next logical step for Luke to continue to be one of the Air Force's premier training bases and will ensure the long-term viability of the base for the next half-century.

Florida's Eglin Air Force Base is the first training facility for F-35 crew and maintenance personnel as directed by the federal government's Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommendations in 2005. Eglin, which currently trains F-15 pilots, will receive its first F-35 in 2010. When fully operational in 2016, Eglin is expected to have 113 F-35 jets and will have welcomed 10,000 new military members and dependents to the region. As a result of its new F-35 mission, new construction at the Florida base is expected to total \$250 million.

NEXT STEP FOR LUKE

Luke AFB is one of several Air Force bases being considered for the second F-35 training base. The Air Force is expected to announce its F-35 basing plans soon and could begin conducting an environmental impact study (EIS) at Luke AFB in October. The study represents the next step in the consideration and selection process that will ultimately determine the location of the second F-35 training base. The Air Force's decision for the second training base is expected to be made in 18-24 months.

If selected, Luke can anticipate an infusion of \$125-150 million in construction-related projects in support of the next mission. This will have an immediate "ripple effect" with other industries in the state as much of this investment will be used to hire construction companies and suppliers of construction material. In addition, the new mission will generate additional employment, wages, consumer spending and investments throughout the Valley and state. Thus, the F-35 mission will bring millions of dollars of additional federal investment along with decades of sustainable economic benefits to the region and Arizona.

Over the last decade, Arizona's federal, state and local representatives have laid the groundwork to strategically position Luke to be selected for the F-35 training mission, thus retaining one of Arizona's largest employers for many years to come.

LET YOUR VOICE AND THE SOUND OF FREEDOM BE HEARD

Local community support of military bases is very important, and Luke AFB is no exception.

- West Valley residents can take the first step in supporting the future F-35 training mission at Luke AFB by registering as a Luke Supporter at www.LukeForward.com.
- Next, citizens can contact their local leaders, state legislators and congressional members to express support for the F-35 mission at Luke AFB. To locate your state legislative and congressional members, visit www.azleg.gov and click on the *How Do I Find* button. Let them know it's important for Luke to remain strong and viable in order to be best positioned for the F-35 mission.
- Also, residents can voice their support of Luke AFB when the federal government seeks public comment from community stakeholders during "public scoping meetings" that will be held as part of the environmental impact study.

Military bases are important to local communities because they provide thousands of jobs and generate a sustainable, recession-proof economic influx of revenue. Defense industry related spending in Maricopa County and other areas of the state generates additional employment, wages, consumer spending and investments and continues to produce more revenue as the spending circulates throughout the state's economy. Also, Luke AFB and other military installations in the state further generate employment by contracting with local businesses for the purchase of goods and services. Additional benefits accrue to Arizona's economy as a result of military-related visitors and the thousands of military retirees living in the Valley and other parts of Arizona. The economic impact that Luke AFB generates every year is especially critical in light of the state's current budget situation.

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

Since 1941, Luke AFB has produced more than 50,000 combat-ready pilots for America's most advanced aircraft fighters. The West Valley base trains 95 percent of all F-16 pilots and plays a critical role in protecting America's freedom and security worldwide. Luke Air Force Base also manages 1.1 million of the 1.7 million acres that comprise the Barry M. Goldwater Range in southern Arizona. The Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force Reserves and the Arizona National Guard use the Goldwater Range for training critical to the security and defense of our nation. The range was established in 1941 to train U.S. Army Air Corps pilots for World War II.

In addition to protecting our nation's defense and being an economic asset to the state, Luke AFB has a profoundly positive impact in our community as base personnel volunteer more than 100,000 hours annually at local schools, churches, youth sports leagues and non-profit organizations.