



Media Release

Glenn E. Crellin, Director

PO Box 644861
Pullman, WA 99164-4861
509-335-7080
FAX: 509-335-7863

Statistics on Washington's housing market and other useful information are available on WCRER's Web site: www.cbe.wsu.edu/~wcrer. For other information on real estate markets around the State of Washington, or general information about the real estate industry in the state (excluding legal questions), readers can reach the WCRER at 1-800-835-9683.

BRAC

Washington's military installations are significant to the economic health and stability of the communities in which they are housed, and the entire state of Washington. Public officials and civic leaders in all communities which host a military base forcefully strive to maintain or expand their facility.

Meanwhile, the federal government and military leadership need to evaluate issues of national security and cost effectiveness of military expenditures by reviewing the location of and activities housed at military facilities nationwide. The first phase of such a review, known as BRAC—Base Realignment And Closure—is under way, with a commission empowered to recommend functional changes or potential closure of some bases to take place in 2005.

Community groups are already preparing their defenses. The Governor's office has recently been preparing information to be used to promote Washington as a jurisdiction with capacity to accommodate larger numbers of military personnel without disrupting community infrastructure. WCRER was asked to provide data on the ability of local housing markets in communities proximate to existing facilities to absorb an enhanced military presence.

Under Washington's Growth Management Act, the communities hosting military facilities are already formally planning for growth, without specifying the source or exact timing of the growth. This preparation should foster the capacity to house personnel if Washington's military installations are asked to expand their scope of activities.

The research also included an assessment of the relative cost to the government of housing military personnel in Washington relative to facilities in other Western states. For career enlisted personnel and officers with dependents, the variance in housing allowances across communities was significant. For example, the housing allowance for a sergeant (E-6) would be \$748 in Spokane and \$1,121 in Pierce counties, home to Washington's Air Force bases. Other Air Force bases in the region have comparable housing allowances, ranging from Mountain Home AFB in Idaho (\$824) to Travis AFB in Vallejo, California (\$1,528). While the housing allowances for naval facilities in Snohomish (\$1,238) and Kitsap (\$1,072) counties seem costly, they compare very favorably to high-cost San Diego (\$1,700).

It's too early to tell which way the winds are blowing, but the State and its communities are actively promoting the advantages of an enhanced military presence in Washington to an audience with a national scope.