



NEWS RELEASE

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Construction to begin on Fort Bliss Commissary

*By Nancy O’Nell,
DeCA West public affairs officer*

FORT LEE, Va. – Construction on a new \$20.3 million commissary to support the increase in troops coming to Fort Bliss, Texas, will begin this month and is programmed to open in the summer of 2011.

The cost of the new commissary is coming from DoD’s base realignment and closure funding for commissary projects required to implement BRAC mission requirements and strategic basing decisions, said Philip E., Sakowitz Jr., director and CEO of the Defense Commissary Agency.

“This store will be large enough to serve the Fort Bliss community as it increases in size,” Sakowitz said. “As always we endeavor to provide a world-class benefit that is worth the trip for our customers wherever they shop.”

With a sales floor area of 60,800 square feet, the new commissary will be one of the largest stores in DeCA’s inventory, comparable in size to the commissary at Fort Belvoir, Va., and larger than the commissary at Fort Lewis, Wash. The store’s sales area will be 2,511 square feet larger than the existing Fort Bliss Commissary and will have modern features that make the space more usable, according to Fort Bliss Store Director Mike Mena.

“Upright freezers in the chill, meat, frozen foods and produce areas will increase the amount and variety of products the store can display,” said Mena. “And we will get three additional self-checkouts.”

The new commissary will feature a large deli and bakery, hot foods, sushi to go and self-checkouts conveniently located next to Grab 'N Go products. The interior will sport a colorful décor with a polished concrete floor and open ceilings.

In keeping with DeCA's environmental policy, the design will incorporate earth-friendly and energy-efficient features. New technology in heating, cooling, and refrigeration will be used throughout the store.

"Natural light will stream in through skylights," said Mickey McCartney, construction project manager with DeCA, "and the store's lighting system will have automatic controls that adjust based on how much natural light is coming in through the skylights."

A water-saving landscaping, heat reflective roof and energy-efficient light fixtures are also part of the earth-friendly design, according to McCartney. The landscaping also incorporates indigenous plants, stone and many other features designed to enhance the exterior look of the commissary.

The store will be built under a contract awarded to Leducor Construction Inc. of San Diego, Calif.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*