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# Public Hearing Set For Possible Fort Drum Missile Interceptor Site

Wednesday, October 1, 2014, Watertown, NY



MGN Online

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Story Published: Jul 29, 2014 at 1:57 PM EDT  
(Story Updated: Jul 29, 2014 at 1:57 PM EDT)

The Missile Defense Agency has now set a date for a public hearing on the possibility Fort Drum would house a missile interceptor site.

The hearing, which will measure environmental impacts and other issues, is set for Carthage High School on Tuesday, August 19 from 6 until 9 p.m.

Fort Drum is one of four sites identified as a possible location for the missiles.

The hearings are the first step in the siting process.

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# Public meeting on potential Fort Drum missile site to be held in Carthage on Aug. 19

PUBLISHED: THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2014 AT 2:50 PM

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CARTHAGE — A meeting for the public to comment on a potential missile site at Fort Drum will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 19, in the cafeteria of Carthage Central High School, 36500 Route 26.

The meeting time was announced by the Missile Defense Agency on its website. In its listing, the agency said the meeting will have an open house format, allowing attendees to ask questions to post and agency officials.

If an Eastern facility is deemed necessary, the site, modeled after Fort Greely, Alaska, would consist of an initial deployment of 20 ground-based interceptors, with the ability to expand to 60 interceptors, according to an agency announcement.

In June, Fort Drum's garrison commander, Col. Gary A. Rosenberg, said there were initial concerns that a placement could affect training, but since then "our concerns have been alleviated."

Other Eastern sites under consideration for missile placement are Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center, Ohio; Naval Air Station Portsmouth SERE Training Area, Maine, and Fort Custer Training Center, Mich.

America's current missile sites are Fort Greely and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

Contact information to submit comments can be found at <http://wdt.me/wQbH9b>.

## Missile site discussion in Carthage

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**Headline:** Open house tonight in Carthage about potential missile site at Fort Drum

**News Date:** 8/19/2014

**Media Contact:** GORDON BLOCK

**Media Outlet:** Watertown Daily Times - Online

**URL:** <http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20140819/NEWS03/140818872>

**Article Text**

CARTHAGE — North country residents will have a chance to ask questions and speak out about a potential missile defense site at Fort Drum during a meeting tonight in Carthage.

The open-house-style meeting will feature a range of stations discussing the design, location and impacts of the potential site, along with various experts who can answer questions about the site.

“It allows people to come to it to interact with people who are doing the environmental impact statement,” said Richard Lehner, a Missile Defense Agency spokesman.

The meeting will run from 6 to 9 p.m. in the cafeteria of Carthage High School, 36500 Route 26.

No decision has been made by the military about a potential East Coast site, which would join defense sites at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. The military's study of potential sites, expected to take about two years, will include feedback received during tonight's meeting.

“What we're looking for is their concerns about things we should look for,” Mr. Lehner said.

Other contenders for the placement are Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center, Ohio; Naval Air Station Portsmouth SERE Training Area, Maine, and Fort Custer Training Center, Mich.

If an Eastern facility is deemed necessary, the site, modeled after Fort Greely, Alaska, would consist of an initial deployment of 20 ground-based interceptors, with the ability to expand to 60 interceptors. The announcement has said the interceptors will not be fired “except in the nation's defense” and that no test firing would occur.

Though supporters of a new site say it is needed to protect against attacks from Iran and North Korea, opponents have questioned the high cost of such a development and its limited accuracy, even in test conditions.

Fort Drum officials initially expressed some concerns that a potential placement would affect their training operations. However, Col. Gary A. Rosenberg, the post's garrison commander, told the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization in June that their concerns were addressed.

The post has been seen by some as a favorite for the placement based on the current development of a missile data terminal complex, also found at the Alaska and California missile sites. Several New York lawmakers, including U.S. Rep. William L. Owens and U.S. Sens. Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand, have endorsed a local placement, as long as the military determines it is needed.

Comments about the potential missile site will be taken until Sept. 15. Contact information to submit comments can be found at <http://wdt.me/wQbH9b>.

**Headline:** Open house tonight in Carthage about potential missile site at Fort Drum

**News Date:** 8/19/2014

**Media Contact:** GORDON BLOCK

**Media Outlet:** Daily Courier-Observer - Online

**URL:** <http://www.mpcourier.com/article/20140819/NEWS03/140818872/1022>

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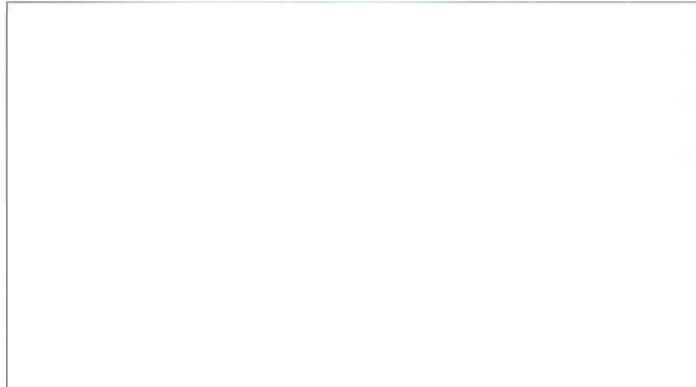
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# 2 Fort Drum Sites Considered For Missile Defense

Wednesday, October 1, 2014, Watertown, NY



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Story Published: Aug 19, 2014 at 3:50 PM EDT  
(Story Updated: Aug 19, 2014 at 6:46 PM EDT )

A proposed East Coast missile defense site on Fort Drum would be located in one of two locations along route 3A in Wilna.

That's part of what those attending a meeting Tuesday night at Carthage High School will learn about.

The meeting will play a part in the Missile Defense Agency's environmental impact statement on the proposed site.

There are three other proposed sites, and a similar meeting has already taken place for two of them.

It's still an estimated two years before Congress will decide whether it will create an East Coast site or not.

A decision will likely come down to politics.

"It'll be up to our representative from the 21st Congressional District, assuming he or she wants an East Coast missile defense site, to push for Fort Drum," said Joseph Jockel, professor of Canadian Studies at St. Lawrence University.

If the professor is right, and the military defense issue becomes a political one, it'll be another issue for candidates in the race for New York's 21st Congressional District to consider.

"The GBI interceptors that they're talking about cost about \$90 million apiece," said Matt Funciello, Green Party candidate.

Funciello said he would vote against any East Coast site.

Republican Elise Stefanik would vote for it and told us she would fight to make Drum the leading contender.

Democrat Aaron Woolf didn't say whether he would vote for or against an East Coast site, but acknowledged Fort Drum as an ideal location for one.

Fort Drum is one of five sites being evaluated and the only one in New York state.

Interceptor sites use missiles to shoot down other missiles.

There are just two other sites in the United States - one in Alaska, the other in California - that cover the West Coast.

Military officials are considering a third to protect the East Coast.



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**Headline:** Residents react to possible missile site at Fort Drum

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Contact:** GORDON BLOCK

**Media Outlet:** Daily Courier-Observer - Online

**URL:** <http://www.mpcourier.com/article/20140820/OGD/140829958>

**Article Text**

CARTHAGE — Residents got their first look Tuesday at what a potential missile defense site at Fort Drum could mean for the region: a facility costing as much as \$4 billion to build that would create as many as 1,800 permanent jobs.

The sprawling site, covering hundreds of acres along Route 3A, initially would contain 20 ground-based interceptors, with the ability to expand to 60 interceptors, designed to shoot down incoming enemy missiles. The Defense Department says the missiles would be for defensive purposes and would not contain warheads.

The military has not decided whether a site is need on the East Coast to augment America's current missile defense locations at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. If such a facility is ultimately approved, however, Fort Drum is on the short list of sites to host it.

The economic impact on the north country would be substantial. The site would create 400 to 600 temporary construction jobs, and an estimated 1,200 to 1,800 permanent military, civilian and contractor jobs, according to Lt. Col. Chris W. Snipes, program manager for continental United States interceptor sites.

The public comments taken during Tuesday night's meeting will help shape the agency's environmental impact statement, a two-year process that is in its early stages.

“There is a lot to come,” Col. Snipes said.

Nearly 100 people attended an open house-style meeting at Carthage High School to hear Fort Drum and Missile Defense Agency officials describe the project, from the size of the missiles, 55 feet long and 4.2 feet in diameter, weighing 22 to 27 tons, to the missile interceptor process, compared to firing a bullet at another bullet.

Two sites on existing government-owned land off Route 3A in the town of Wilna were mapped out for the complex.

One is 726.3 acres to the north of the state highway, with an potential 260.6-acre expansion area. A second site, to the south, is 367.9 acres in size, with a 257.7-acre expansion area that would require a section of Route 3A to be reconfigured.

Looking at a map, Kurt A. and Terry C. Neibacher of Carthage studied impacts to Route 3A, along with some hunting areas they enjoyed. Mr. Neibacher, who retired from the Army at Fort Drum, said he thought the potential missile complex could help the post's standing.

“For me, it's something else to keep Fort Drum here,” he said.

Many echoed their support of the project.

John F. Gallagher, of Carthage, saw military value in such a placement, comparing it to missile defense resources in Israel.

“The missiles that worry me are the ones coming in,” he said. “If you don't think it'll happen, you may be living in a hole.”

Dan C. Nevills, a Wilna town councilman, said he was 75 percent in favor of the complex, because of its economic benefit, and 25 percent opposed due to fears of potential danger.

Col. Gary A. Rosenberg, the garrison commander at Fort Drum, said the main concerns for 10th Mountain Division leaders were potential impacts on training.

Starting from 10 parcels at Fort Drum under consideration, the list was whittled down to the two off Route 3A, he said.

“What's left suits their needs, and suits our needs,” Col. Rosenberg said.

Asked about how a missile site could affect Army evaluations of Fort Drum's future, he said it could add another dimension to the post's offerings.

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Other contenders for the missile site placement are Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center, Ohio; Naval Air Station Portsmouth SERE Training Area, Maine; and Fort Custer Training Center, Mich.

Having already held meetings regarding the Ohio and Maine sites, the Missile Defense Agency officials will hold a pair of hearings in Michigan next week.

The agency is studying the possibility of an East Coast missile defense site following orders from Congress in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Public comment will be taken until Sept. 15.

Contact information to submit comments can be found at <http://wdt.me/wQbH9b>.

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# Missile site considered for Fort Drum could employ 1,800

By GORDON BLOCK  
JOHNSON NEWSPAPERS  
PUBLISHED: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014 AT 5:04 AM



JOHNSON NEWSPAPERS PHOTO BY AMANDA MORRISON

Maj. Keith S. Tucker, center, answers questions about the proposed missile site at Fort Drum, during a meeting at Carthage High School on Tuesday.



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## Potential missile sites on Route 3A, Wilna



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# Missile site on Fort Drum could create nearly 2,000 Jobs

Nathan Lehman - 790 WTNY ( )

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Carthage (WTNY) - North Country residents learned more Tuesday night about a possible missile defense system being set up at Ft. Drum.

An open house style meeting was held at Carthage High School to give the public a chance to gauge more details and submit an opinion.

If Fort Drum is chosen for a missile defense system site, it would be located at two government owned parcels along Route 3A in the Town of Wilna. Officials say the project could cost up to 4 billion dollars and create nearly 2,000 permanent jobs in the area.

The military is considering placing a defense system for the East Coast at a number of locations. No final decision on the matter has been made. Public comment is being accepted until September 15.

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# Missile site considered for Fort Drum could employ 1,800

August 20, 2014 By [NNYBiz](#)



Maj. Chris J. Anderson, center, gives an overview of the proposed missile site at Fort Drum, during a

meeting at Carthage  
High School on  
Tuesday. Amanda  
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Business

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*By Gordon Block, Times Staff Writer*

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## Neighbors Support Potential Missile Defense Site on Fort Drum

By: **Elizabeth Jeneault** Updated 08/20/2014 10:28 AM

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CARTHAGE, N.Y. -- The Missile Defense Agency is in the beginning stages of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement. Once complete, the Department of Defense could select one of the four sites being studied.

The DOD has yet to make a decision as to whether or not an East Coast site is even needed. Residents hope that if they do make that decision, they choose Fort Drum.

"I just hope we get it," said Tina Lanier, a Carthage resident. "I think it'll be a great thing for Fort Drum and our local economy and if we don't, I don't know why."

Fort Drum's Garrison Commander said that at first, he and others were concerned about the site's proposed location on post. Now that the location has changed, he says leaders are open to whatever decision the DOD makes.

"What is left are places that suit their needs and suit our needs in terms of keeping a trained and ready force for our Army and our nation," said Col. Gary Rosenberg.

When asked if the site's potential arrival could protect the post against further troop cuts there, he said it could play a factor. Neighbors believe that notion as well.

"I think it'll just be another reason to keep it open," said Lewis County resident JoEllen Heukrath.

Neighbors said they also support the many jobs the multi-billion dollar project would bring. Although nearly everyone at the meeting showed support for it, some questioned what the environmental impact would be. After they learned that the missiles don't have warheads, and aren't nuclear, those concerns dissolved.

"I think in light of that, I'm really struggling to find a reason why it wouldn't be a good project for the area," said Carthage resident James Uhlinger Jr.

If the post were selected, 20 ground-based interceptors would initially be deployed there. That number could eventually expand to 60.

Comments will be accepted through September 15. They can be e-mailed to [MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM](mailto:MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM).  
(<mailto:MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM>)

**Headline:** Missile site considered for Fort Drum could employ 1,800

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Contact:** GORDON BLOCK

**Media Outlet:** Watertown Daily Times - Online

**URL:** <http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20140820/NEWS03/140829948>

**Article Text**

CARTHAGE — Residents got their first look Tuesday at what a potential missile defense site at Fort Drum could mean for the region: a facility costing as much as \$4 billion to build that would create as many as 1,800 permanent jobs.

The sprawling site, covering hundreds of acres along Route 3A, initially would contain 20 ground-based interceptors, with the ability to expand to 60 interceptors, designed to shoot down incoming enemy missiles. The Defense Department says the missiles would be for defensive purposes and would not contain warheads.

The military has not decided whether a site is need on the East Coast to augment America's current missile defense locations at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. If such a facility is ultimately approved, however, Fort Drum is on the short list of sites to host it.

The economic impact on the north country would be substantial. The site would create 400 to 600 temporary construction jobs, and an estimated 1,200 to 1,800 permanent military, civilian and contractor jobs, according to Lt. Col. Chris W. Snipes, program manager for continental United States interceptor sites.

The public comments taken during Tuesday night's meeting will help shape the agency's environmental impact statement, a two-year process that is in its early stages.

“There is a lot to come,” Col. Snipes said.

Nearly 100 people attended an open house-style meeting at Carthage High School to hear Fort Drum and Missile Defense Agency officials describe the project, from the size of the missiles, 55 feet long and 4.2 feet in diameter, weighing 22 to 27 tons, to the missile interceptor process, compared to firing a bullet at another bullet.

Two sites on existing government-owned land off Route 3A in the town of Wilna were mapped out for the complex.

One is 726.3 acres to the north of the state highway, with an potential 260.6-acre expansion area. A second site, to the south, is 367.9 acres in size, with a 257.7-acre expansion area that would require a section of Route 3A to be reconfigured.

Looking at a map, Kurt A. and Terry C. Neibacher of Carthage studied impacts to Route 3A, along with some hunting areas they enjoyed. Mr. Neibacher, who retired from the Army at Fort Drum, said he thought the potential missile complex could help the post's standing.

“For me, it's something else to keep Fort Drum here,” he said.

Many echoed their support of the project.

John F. Gallagher, of Carthage, saw military value in such a placement, comparing it to missile defense resources in Israel.

“The missiles that worry me are the ones coming in,” he said. “If you don't think it'll happen, you may be living in a hole.”

Dan C. Nevills, a Wilna town councilman, said he was 75 percent in favor of the complex, because of its economic benefit, and 25 percent opposed due to fears of potential danger.

Col. Gary A. Rosenberg, the garrison commander at Fort Drum, said the main concerns for 10th Mountain Division leaders were potential impacts on training.

Starting from 10 parcels at Fort Drum under consideration, the list was whittled down to the two off Route 3A, he said.

“What's left suits their needs, and suits our needs,” Col. Rosenberg said.

Asked about how a missile site could affect Army evaluations of Fort Drum's future, he said it could add another dimension to the post's offerings.

“On the surface it would seem to be a good thing,” Col. Rosenberg said.

Other contenders for the missile site placement are Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center, Ohio; Naval Air Station Portsmouth SERE Training Area, Maine; and Fort Custer Training Center, Mich.

Having already held meetings regarding the Ohio and Maine sites, the Missile Defense Agency officials will hold a pair of hearings in Michigan next week.

The agency is studying the possibility of an East Coast missile defense site following orders from Congress in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Public comment will be taken until Sept. 15.

Contact information to submit comments can be found at <http://wdt.me/wQbH9b>.



# NYS missile defense base could create 1,800 jobs

By Nancy Sanders, News 4 Operations Manager

Published: August 20, 2014, 2:23 pm | Updated: August 20, 2014, 3:59 pm



**CARTHAGE, N.Y. (WIVB)** – A potential missile defense site at Fort Drum that would cost \$4 billion to build would create as many as 1,800 permanent jobs.

*The Watertown Daily Times* reports that residents in the northern New York community of Carthage got a first look at the proposal. The Defense Department says missiles and interceptors that would be housed on-site would be for defensive purposes and would not contain warheads.

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Fort Drum is on the short list for potential missile sites that would augment current defense bases in Alaska and California.

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## REGIONAL COVERAGE

## Fort Drum hosts open-house to discuss proposed missile defense site

By [Gino Geruntino \(/people/gino-geruntino\)](#)[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/styles/x\\_large/public/201408/photo\\_1\\_4.JPG](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/styles/x_large/public/201408/photo_1_4.JPG)

A small crowd gathered at Carthage High School to learn more about a proposed missile site that could be built at Fort Drum.

*Gino Geruntino*

Fort Drum near Watertown is one of a handful of sites being considered as an East Coast missile defense site. A meeting was held Tuesday at Carthage High School to gauge the community's interest on the potential project.

Lt. Col. Chris Snipes, with the Missile Defense Agency, says the study being performed right now looks at a variety of factors when it comes to where the prospective site might go.

"What's happening on the installation as far as the wildlife and their habitat, wetlands and things of that nature," Snipes said. "But also we look at it from a community aspect as well. Not just what's happening on post, but we look at the outstanding community as well. As far as the people, if this site is deployed and Fort Drum is selected, then those people that would work here permanently would be part of the community."

If built, the site would have several different buildings that could possibly fill a nearly 1,000 acre area.

"We would have a missile defense complex that would have some administrative buildings, some warehousing, a missile assembly building, interceptor storage facility," Snipes explained. "So that all plays into our



missile defense complex and then also the interceptors themselves."

Lt. Col. Dan Martin, with the Missile Defense Agency, says all of the sites are meant to protect the U.S. from possible attacks by third-world countries like Iran and North Korea.

"Our system is strictly a defensive system," Martin said. "We've never had to use it, and we hope we never will have to use it."

<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/201408/missile.jpg>

Visitors were given packets with information like this, showing how exactly a missile interceptor works.

*Credit Missile Defense Agency*



**Listen**  
3:13

*Lt. Col. Dan Martin discusses how a missile interceptor works.*

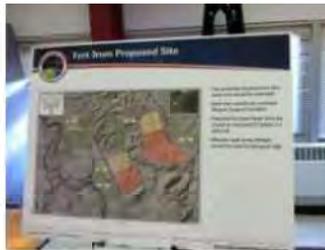
The missiles would not be fired unless they were to be used to protect the nation, and no test firing would be conducted at the East Coast location.

JoEllen Heukrath, a supporter of the proposed project, says she would like to see the site come to the fort.

"I Think that Fort Drum has been a good influence on the area," Heukrath said. "I support the troops, I support anyone that serves in Fort Drum, and I think it's been a positive influence on the North Country."

She says she used Tuesday's open-house style event to clear up some lingering concerns that she had regarding the project.

"I got some questions answered about if they took into consideration how long our winters are, as far as construction," Heukrath said. "It's two years down the road until they make a decision, and then another three years before construction. Again, that's all good for Fort Drum."



[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/201408/photo\\_3\\_3.JPG](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/201408/photo_3_3.JPG)

The red sections on the map show the options highlighted for a possible missile defense site at Fort Drum. The yellow sections are where possible expansions could take place.

*Credit Gino Gerentino / WRVO*

James Uhlinger also came out to show his support. As a small business owner, he says it's important that the upstate economy continue to grow.

"Jobs are the number one driver, especially in an economy like upstate New York," Uhlinger said. "A lot of what happens here, it isn't all directly as a result of Fort Drum, but it is basically a piggyback on Fort Drum, and the multipliers are large."

He says he likes the proposed plan, but says he's heard certain questions come up about the site and the missiles themselves.

"The main thing I've heard a few people talking about was they were concerned whether or not these are nuclear missiles," Uhlinger said. "And they're not, they're impact missiles. There's no explosive charge, no nuclear material in them at all. To me, that was kind of, of the people I talked to, that was the overriding concern, and I'm glad to hear that that's not so."

Officials with the agency say they've seen mostly supportive comments from North Country residents. They say reaction has been more mixed in the other locations being considered for a possible missile site, including the SERE East in Maine, Camp Revenna Joint Military Training Center in Ohio, and Fort Custer Training Center in Michigan.



The proposed site would have 20 ground-based interceptor missiles and silos, with the option to expand out to 60. It would also join two other long-range interceptor sites already active in California and Alaska. This would be the only active site on the East Coast.

[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/2014/08/photo\\_2\\_3.JPG](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/2014/08/photo_2_3.JPG)

Members of the Missile Defense Agency discuss Fort Drum with North Country residents.  
Credit Gino Geruntino / WRVO

But Lt. Col. Snipes says establishing a site on the East Coast isn't officially a done deal, and may not even be deemed necessary.

"With any type of department acquisition or any type of study, there's always a no action alternative," Snipes said. "And so there is no preferred alternative. All four sites are equal right now and that's where we stand."

Public comments regarding the possible missile site can be submitted until September 15. The entire study is expected to take about two years to complete.

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# Public Comments On Fort Drum Missile Site Proposal

Wednesday, October 1, 2014, Watertown, NY



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Story Published: Aug 20, 2014 at 6:27 AM EDT  
(Story Updated: Aug 20, 2014 at 12:11 PM EDT)

Fort Drum is just one of four places being considered for an East Coast missile interceptor site. For Tina Lanier of the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, that's good news.

"I think it's a good thing," she said, "because, one, it's going to develop jobs, and we're not just talking high technical jobs, we're talking administrative jobs."

Lanier is just one of many people who stopped by Carthage High School Tuesday night for a public scoping meeting.

It gave people a chance to learn about the two areas being looked at along Route 3A in the town of Wilna.

Military officials say the project could create 400 to 600 construction jobs and 1,200 to 1,400 permanent jobs for military personnel, civilians and contractors.

This is one of the beginning stages of an environmental impact study.

The study's only just begun," said Eric Sorrells of the Missile Defense Agency, "but the typical big three areas that we look at are the endangered species, cultural resources and the wetlands.

Military officials say a missile interceptor site is safe to have in a residential area.

"We attack the incoming threats in outer space, so that's where the intercept occurs, in outer space," Lt. Col. Chris Snipes said. "With a bullet hitting a bullet, all the debris is in outer space and then as it falls through the atmosphere, it burns up."

Don't expect to see a missile interceptor site anytime soon. It will take about two years before the study is complete.

Even if Fort Drum is selected, Congress still has to decide whether it wants an interceptor site at all.

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**Headline:** Many north country residents expressed their support tuesday for the possibility of fort drum being a missile defense site.

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Outlet:** YNN Central New York

**Article Text**

Many north country residents expressed their support Tuesday for the possibility of fort drum being a missile defense site. The post is one of four east-coast locations being considered by the Missile Defense Agency.

39 comments

# Fort Drum missile interceptor site would employ up to 1,800 in military, civilian jobs



The Pentagon is considering whether to build a missile-interceptor at Fort Drum or three other East Coast sites. The photo shows a ground-based missile interceptor as it is lowered into its missile site at the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely, Alaska. Eighteen interceptors are employed in two fields on the 800-acre complex. Photo by Sgt. Jack W. Carlson III, USA.

Print ([http://blog.syracuse.com/news/print.html?entry=2014/08/fort\\_drum\\_missile\\_interceptor\\_site\\_would\\_employ\\_up\\_to\\_1800\\_in\\_military\\_civilian.html](http://blog.syracuse.com/news/print.html?entry=2014/08/fort_drum_missile_interceptor_site_would_employ_up_to_1800_in_military_civilian.html))  
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Follow on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MarkWeinerDC>)  
on August 22, 2014 at 12:12 PM, updated August 22, 2014 at 4:05 PM

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- If the U.S. Missile Defense Agency decides to build an East Coast missile defense site at Fort Drum, the base would employ up to 1,800 military and civilian personnel and contractors, according to the Pentagon.

The estimate of the economic impact of a missile interceptor base was among the details **shared with neighbors of Fort Drum**

## FORT DRUM

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**Fort Drum missile interceptor site would employ up to 1,800 in military, civilian jobs**  
(<http://www.syracuse.com/news/index>)

(<http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20140820/NEWS03/140820948>) at a meeting Tuesday night in Carthage, according to the Watertown Daily Times.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency sponsored the meeting to **ask for public comments** ([http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/07/pentagon\\_wants\\_to\\_hear\\_from\\_public\\_about\\_possible\\_fort\\_drum\\_missile\\_interceptor.html](http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/07/pentagon_wants_to_hear_from_public_about_possible_fort_drum_missile_interceptor.html)) before its begins a two-year environmental impact study of four potential East Coast missile defense sites.

The other potential sites that will be evaluated are Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center in Ohio, Fort Custer in Michigan and a military base adjoining the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

Although Pentagon leaders say an East Coast missile interceptor base is not necessary for the nation's defense, the study must be completed to comply with a requirement from Congress. Some Republican House members insist the Pentagon **should build an East Coast base** ([http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/04/fort\\_drum\\_griffins\\_air\\_force\\_expanding\\_the\\_nation\\_s\\_missile\\_defense\\_capabilities](http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/04/fort_drum_griffins_air_force_expanding_the_nation_s_missile_defense_capabilities)).

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency has two active ground-based missile interceptor sites, but they are both in the West, at Fort Greely in Alaska and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Written comments regarding the scope of the study may be e-mailed to [MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM](mailto:MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM) (<mailto:MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.COM>) or by fax to 913-458-1091 or by mail to: Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp., Attn: MDACIS EIS, 6601 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS 66211-1504. The public comment period ends Sept. 15.

The study comes as the Pentagon debates future budget cuts and reductions in the size of the Army. New York's congressional delegation **sent a letter today** (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/217sk4w4iwersuw/201408211609%20Fort%20Drum.pdf?dl=0>) to Army Secretary John McHugh, who once represented Fort Drum in Congress, asking him to prevent additional cutbacks at the home of the 10th Mountain Division.

Contact Washington Correspondent Mark Weiner at [mweiner@syracuse.com](mailto:mweiner@syracuse.com) (<mailto:mweiner@syracuse.com>) or 571-970-3751. Follow him on Twitter @MarkWeinerDC (<https://twitter.com/MarkWeinerDC>)

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**Fort Custer Training Center (FCTC),  
Augusta, Michigan  
Newspaper Articles in Appendix J**

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## The Times Herald Columnists Section

*Written by Jim Hettinger*

*Sep. 30*

thetimesherald.com

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Some people have expressed concern that if Fort Custer is selected for the Interceptor Missile Site, Battle Creek will become a target for everything from Russian attack missiles to protests from Code Pink.

While I would surely prefer the former to the latter, it may be a case of having become used to it.

As a boy growing up in Albion, I was brought up to believe we were a target. There were Strategic Air Defense installations in Calhoun County, including large radar deployments in the northern part of Fort Custer. ...



## Kalamazoo County Board urged to support ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center

NatGuard-8.JPG

Soldiers from several Michigan Army National Guard units are shown in this Jan. 6, 2013 file photo during a departure ceremony at Fort Custer. The Fort Custer Training Center, which straddles Calhoun and Kalamazoo county, is utilized by the Michigan Army National Guard . The Air National Guard is based nearby at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek. *(John A. Lacko | MLive File)*

**Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com** By **Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com**

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on August 19, 2014 at 11:30 AM, updated August 19, 2014 at 1:52 PM

**BATTLE CREEK, MI** – The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners is being asked to urge the United States Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

Fort Custer, whose 7,500 acres straddles Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties, is one of four U.S. sites on a short list of possible locations for what is called the Ground Based Interceptor Ballistic Missile Defense Mission.

It is a missile defense system that would be used to shoot down intercontinental missiles fired at the eastern United States, impacting and destroying any attacking missiles in outer space.

Calhoun County officials say development of the system will have a \$3.2 billion impact on the regional economy, including the addition of 300 new jobs, \$700 million in new construction, and an estimated 1,800 new spinoff jobs.

**Battle Creek Unlimited**, the economic development organization for the Cereal City, says bringing the project here would also complement more than \$100 million that has been spent over the last 10 years by local, state and federal governments on the region's military bases.

Fort Custer is a federally owned but state-operated Michigan Army National Guard training center, used by units from several branches of the military from throughout the Midwest.

"They are not weaponized," Jan Frantz, director of corporate projects for Battle Creek Unlimited, said of the interceptor missiles that would be located at **Fort Custer**. She also said, "There will be no testing at this site."

Congress has not appropriated money for the project, but the Department of Defense has been working for several months to determine what it wants to do if or when the project is approved, Frantz said. Part of that is conducting a broad-range environmental impact study that includes such things as the quality of life in the

communities being considered and support for the project by local, regional and state entities, she said.

With those things in mind, the Department of Defense has been explaining the project to governmental entities and asking for their support.

Members of the **Kalamazoo County Board** were to be asked to support the project Tuesday during their regular 7 p.m. meeting at the Kalamazoo County Administration Building, 201 W. Kalamazoo Ave.

The environmental impact study portion of the project's development is expected to continue for another 17 to 23 months at Fort Custer and other sites being considered. They include locations in Ohio, Maine and New York state.

*Business writer **Al Jones** may be contacted at [ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com). Follow me on Twitter at [ajones5\\_al](https://twitter.com/ajones5_al).*

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## Public input sessions are Aug. 26 and 28 for missile defense project at Fort Custer

Al Jones | [ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com) By Al Jones | [ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com)

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on August 19, 2014 at 3:30 PM, updated August 19, 2014 at 3:36 PM

**KALAMAZOO, MI** – As military, government and other proponents urge the construction of a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center, there are opportunities for public input.

Those wanting to have input on the project, or who want more information, have two opportunities:

-6 to 9 p.m. on Aug. 26 in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly Plaza Hotel, 50 Capital Avenue SW in Battle Creek;

-6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 28 in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.



Soldiers from several Michigan Army National Guard units are shown in this Jan. 6, 2013 file photo during a departure ceremony at Fort Custer. The Fort Custer Training Center, which straddles Calhoun and Kalamazoo county, is utilized by the Michigan Army National Guard . The Air National Guard is based nearby at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek.

John A. Lacko | MLive File

The Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to host the public meetings to solicit input for an environmental impact study – a more broadly defined study than one focused simply on the land, water and infrastructure.

It will consider such things as quality of life in the four U.S. communities being considered for the project, as well as regional and state support for the project, according to Jan Frantz, director of corporate projects for **Battle Creek Unlimited**, the economic development organization for Battle Creek.

It is seeking support from **various governmental** and business organizations in the region.

According to a press release by the Department of Defense, the meetings are intended to review the scope of the environmental impact statement it is crafting for a potential missile interceptor site to be located at the Fort Custer Training Center.

"The public meeting will be an open house format, which provides attendees with the opportunity to talk with and ask questions of representatives from the MDA and Fort Custer," according to the DOD. "Additionally, you will have the opportunity to provide verbal and written official comments. The MDA will use your input to help identify environmental and other issues to be considered in completing this EIS (Environmental Impact Study)."

**Fort Custer** is a 7,500-acre federally owned, training center for the Michigan Army National Guard and other branches of the military. It straddles Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties and along with sites in Ohio, Maine and New York state is one of four places being considered as a possible location for what is called the Ground Based Interceptor Ballistic Missile Defense Mission.

That is a missile defense system that would attempt to protect the eastern United States from intercontinental missile attacks by impacting and destroying any attacking missiles in outer space.

Calhoun county officials have said the project will have a \$3.2 billion impact of the regions economy, including the addition of 300 new jobs.

The Department of Defense has not made a decision on whether it will build the missile interceptor site, but is spending several months laying the groundwork for consideration by Congress.

Those unable to attend the meetings may submit written comments until Sept. 15 by sending:

-An email to **MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.com**;

-A fax to 913-458-1091;

-A letter to Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp., Attention: MDA CIS EIS, 6601 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS, 66211-1504

More information may also be available via: **[www.mda.mil/about/enviro\\_cis.html](http://www.mda.mil/about/enviro_cis.html)**

*MLive Business writer* **Al Jones** may be contacted at **[ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com)**. Follow me on Twitter at **[ajones5\\_al](#)**.

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**Headline:** Kalamazoo County considers defense resolution

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Outlet:** 9&10 News

**URL:** <http://www.9and10news.com/story/26324679/kalamazoo-county-considers-defense-resolution>

**Article Text**

KALAMAZOO, Mich. (AP) - Kalamazoo County officials will decide whether to ask the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

The Kalamazoo Gazette reports (<http://bit.ly/1AxFYhL> ) the county board of commissioners will vote at its Sept. 2 meeting on a resolution on the system to protect the eastern U.S. from intercontinental attacks. The board decided to vote after hearing a presentation Tuesday by commanders of the Augusta training center and the Battle Creek Air National Guard. They're asking local governments, businesses and organizations to support the project.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to solicit residents' input for an environmental impact study. Public meetings are scheduled in Battle Creek on Aug. 26 and in Augusta on Aug. 28.

Information from: Kalamazoo Gazette, <http://www.mlive.com/kalamazoo>

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## Kalamazoo County Board to vote Sept. 2 on support for missile defense system at Fort Custer

1Board.JPG

Members of the Kalamazoo County Commission's Committee of The Whole listen Tuesday (Aug. 19, 2014) as Lt. Col Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, does a presentation of a proposed missile defense system for the eastern United States. He is among military personnel asking area governments for support for the project's development at Fort Custer. *(Al Jones | MLive/gazette)*

**Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com** By **Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com**

**Follow on Twitter**

on August 20, 2014 at 6:50 AM, updated August 20, 2014 at 8:37 AM

**KALAMAZOO, MI** – The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners will decide in two weeks if it will pass a resolution to urge the United States Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

Members of the **County Board's** Committee of the Whole agreed that the full board would vote on the matter at its Sept. 2 meeting after hearing a presentation on Tuesday by Lt. Col Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, and Col. Ron Wilson, commander of the Battle Creek Air National Guard.

The men are asking area governments, business organizations and others for their support for development of the project.

Jan Frantz, director of corporate projects for Battle Creek Unlimited, the economic development organization for the Cereal City, said the project will have an \$3.2 billion positive economic impact on the region's economy, as discerned by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. That is expected to include 300 additional jobs in the area.

Fort Custer is a training base for the U.S. Army Reserves and other branches of the military. The Air National Guard has a base at the adjacent W.K. Kellogg Airport.



Lt. Col Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, and Jan Frantz, director of corporate projects for Battle Creek Unlimited, present information on Tuesday (Aug. 19, 2014) to members of the Kalamazoo County Commission's Committee of The Whole.

Al Jones | MLive/Gazette

"I think this could be a great boost to the economic development side," said Commissioner John Taylor, after asking Gorzynski how likely is it that Fort Custer will be chosen for the project.

Gorzynski said he thinks Fort Custer is one of two locations that is best suited for the project, which is intended to protect the eastern United States from intercontinental ballistic missile attacks. Other sites include military installations in Ohio, Maine and New York state.

But the commander emphasized that Congress has not appropriated money for the project or authorized its construction. He said the Department of Defense is working to determine what it wants to do if or when the project is approved and has spent about \$285,000 thus far to put together an environmental impact study here.

It will include such things as the project's potential impact on wetlands and the habitats of bats and butterflies. But it will also include an assessment of the quality of life that could be anticipated by military personnel brought into the area and how much support there is for the project by local, regional and state entities.

The 7,500-acre Fort Custer Training Center straddles Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties.

"Currently the requirement is to establish a feasible location for a proposed construction of an East Coast-based interceptor missile site," Gorzynski said. "Fort Custer is one of four locations going through an environmental impact study to determine the feasibility of the four locations should the need be required to deploy an East Coast-based missile system."

Commissioner Julie Rogers asked if the installation of equipment and the ongoing, increased truck traffic to the site would negatively effect roads. Gorzynski said the majority of high-weight equipment that would be added would be flown into the location by military aircraft and not impact roads.

There are two public meetings set for those who want to have input on the project, or who want more information. They are:

-6 to 9 p.m. on Aug. 26 in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly Plaza Hotel, 50 Capital Avenue SW in Battle Creek;

-6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 28 in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.

The Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to host the public meetings to solicit input for an environmental impact study.

Those unable to attend the meetings may submit written comments until Sept. 15 by sending:

-An email to **MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.com;**

-A fax to 913-458-1091;

-A letter to Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp., Attention: MDA CIS EIS, 6601 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS, 66211-1504

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*MLive Business writer* **Al Jones** may be contacted at **[ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com)**. Follow me on Twitter at **[ajones5\\_al](#)**.

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**Headline:** Kalamazoo County considers resolution supporting Fort Custer ballistic missile defense system

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Outlet:** Johnson County Daily Journal

**URL:** <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/1551860b917446cf9866b2e268d07d2f/MI--Missile-Defense-Michigan/>

**Article Text**

KALAMAZOO, Michigan — Kalamazoo County officials will decide whether to ask the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

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The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to solicit residents' input for an environmental impact study. Public meetings are scheduled in Battle Creek on Aug. 26 and in Augusta on Aug. 28.

Information from: Kalamazoo Gazette, <http://www.mlive.com/kalamazoo>

# Mich. county considers missile defense system

Aug. 20, 2014 - 10:26AM | 0 Comments

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The Associated Press

**KALAMAZOO, MICH.** — Kalamazoo County officials will decide whether to ask the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

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The Kalamazoo Gazette reports the county board of commissioners will vote at its Sept. 2 meeting on a resolution on the system to protect the eastern U.S. from intercontinental attacks. The board decided to vote after hearing a presentation Tuesday by commanders of the Augusta training center and the Battle Creek Air National Guard. They're asking local governments, businesses and organizations to support the project.

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# Mich. county considers missile defense system

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The Associated Press

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**Headline:** Kalamazoo County considers resolution supporting Fort Custer ballistic missile defense system

**News Date:** 8/20/2014

**Media Outlet:** The Republic - Online

**URL:** <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/1551860b917446cf9866b2e268d07d2f/MI--Missile-Defense-Michigan>

**Article Text**

KALAMAZOO, Michigan — Kalamazoo County officials will decide whether to ask the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

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The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to solicit residents' input for an environmental impact study. Public meetings are scheduled in Battle Creek on Aug. 26 and in Augusta on Aug. 28.

Information from: Kalamazoo Gazette, <http://www.mlive.com/kalamazoo>

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# Kalamazoo County considers defense resolution

By - Associated Press - Wednesday, August 20, 2014

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KALAMAZOO, Mich. (AP) - Kalamazoo County officials will decide whether to ask the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

The Kalamazoo Gazette reports (<http://bit.ly/1AxFYhL>) the county board of commissioners will vote at its Sept. 2 meeting on a resolution on the system to protect the eastern U.S. from intercontinental attacks. The board decided to vote after hearing a presentation Tuesday by commanders of the Augusta training center and the Battle Creek Air National Guard. They're asking local governments, businesses and organizations to support the project.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is working with the Michigan Army National Guard to solicit residents' input for an environmental impact study. Public meetings are scheduled in Battle Creek on Aug. 26 and in Augusta on Aug. 28.

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Information from: Kalamazoo Gazette, <http://www.mlive.com/kalamazoo>

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## Kalamazoo County Board asked to support Ballistic Missile Defense facility

Wednesday, August 20, 2014 5:48 a.m. EDT by John McNeill

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FORT CUSTER (WKZO) -- The Kalamazoo County Commission has received a request to urge the Pentagon to place an anti-ballistic missile defense facility at the Fort Custer Training Center.

A large portion of the base is located in Kalamazoo County.

Most of the push for the installation has come from agencies in Battle Creek, primarily Battle Creek Unlimited.

They say it would create 300 permanent jobs, cost 3.2 billion to build and pump up the local economy.

It would also theoretically protect the east coast of the U.S. from missile attack.

There are just a few obstacles. Congress hasn't approved funding.

Three other sites in Ohio, New York State and Maine, that are all closer to the east coast, are also under consideration.

It's not yet clear the U.S. east coast will ever be at risk of missile attack.

Right now the Pentagon is just planning to be prepared in case the need arises, and there are no guarantees it will ever be built.

Two public hearings on the concept are planned next week to develop information for an environmental impact statement. That apparently is the first step in the pre-planning effort.

The first hearing will be held at the McCamley Plaza Hotel next Tuesday night., August 26th. The second will be next Thursday evening, the 28th, at Sherman Lake YMCA in Augusta.

Both sessions will get underway at 6 p.m.

**Headline:** Hearings for missile-defense mission scheduled

**News Date:** 8/21/2014

**Media Outlet:** Lansing State Journal -- Online, The

**URL:** [http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/A5/20140820/NEWS01/308200013/Hearings-missile-defense-mission-scheduled?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/A5/20140820/NEWS01/308200013/Hearings-missile-defense-mission-scheduled?nclick_check=1)

**Article Text**

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency and the Michigan Army National Guard will host two public meetings next week to discuss the possibility of a missile-defense mission coming to Fort Custer.

The meetings are scheduled for Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m. at McCamly Plaza Hotel' s Branson Ballroom, 50 Capital Ave. S.W., and Thursday, Aug. 28 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Sherman Lake YMCA' s Great Hall, 6225 North 39th St., Augusta

The public will be able to review the process for an environmental impact statement and information will be gathered to “ help the MDA (Missile Defense Agency) identify environmental and other issues of concern.”

Once a draft is completed, a second round of public meetings will be scheduled to present findings and gather additional input.

Battle Creek was unveiled as one of four potential sites being considered to house a ballistic missile defense site as the Defense Department considers creating an East Coast location for protection against missile attacks from Iran or other threats. Camp Ravenna Ohio, Fort Drum in New York and Portsmouth Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Training Area in Maine are also in the running.

The Defense Department has not yet decided on whether such a site is necessary. And an environmental impact study will take more than a year to complete.

The Battle Creek City Commission has formally put its support behind Fort Custer Training Center' s bid for the mission.

More information can be found at [www.mda.mil/about/enviro\\_CIS.html](http://www.mda.mil/about/enviro_CIS.html).

Written comments about the project can be submitted between until Sept. 15 by fax at (913) 458-1091, by email to [MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.com](mailto:MDA.CIS.EIS@BV.com) or by mail to Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp., Attn: MDACIS, 6601 College Boulevard, Overland Park, Kansas 66211-1504. It must be postmarked or received by Sept. 12 to be part of official record.



## Take our poll: Should the U.S. build a missile defense system at Fort Custer?

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**Julie Mack | [jmack1@mlive.com](mailto:jmack1@mlive.com)** By **Julie Mack | [jmack1@mlive.com](mailto:jmack1@mlive.com)**

on August 24, 2014 at 1:15 PM, updated August 24, 2014 at 6:20 PM

**AUGUSTA, MI** -- Public hearings are being held this week to debate the pros and cons of building a ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer near Augusta.

Fort Custer is one of four sites being considered for construction for the system, which would be designed is to protect the eastern United States from any attacking long-range missiles fired at the U.S. by impacting and destroying them in outer space.

**RELATED STORY: As Fort Custer takes aim at missile system, pros and cons are being launched.**

Online commenters offer strong views on the subject.

"Here comes the big FEAR campaign from Fred and his supporters," posted oneauthority. "Well, you need to go talk to a psychologist about your fear problem. As a military person I have seen this over and over. Hawks have always used the FEAR campaign when they want to waste more of our money we do not have. Your children, and their children are the ones who will pay for it."

**Michigosling113** agrees it may be boondoogle, but says it could be a good thing for Michigan: "Missile defense is a hopelessly ineffective strategy, to the extent that burning all the money allocated to this program as fuel in the winter would probably be less wasteful. That said, if congress approves this program, why shouldn't we be the ones to take their money?"

"All for it," posted **MSUdem**. "This will help the economy. It does not sound like a lot of jobs, but it is a start. The trickle down affect will create some more jobs, but the extra money from sales, food, restaurants ect, ect will help."

What do you think?

The public hearings will be held Tuesday and Thursday.

The first will be 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26, in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly Plaza Hotel, 50 Capital Ave., SW in Battle Creek.

The second will be 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 28, in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.

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## Military leaders say Fort Custer Training Center is a strong candidate for missile defense system

### Lt. Col. Mark Gorzynski

Lt. Col. Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, talks about the missile defense system proposed by the U.S. department of Defense.

**Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com** By **Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com**

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on August 25, 2014 at 12:30 PM, updated August 25, 2014 at 2:24 PM

**KALAMAZOO, MI** -- If the government is going to spend lots of money, Southwest Michigan might as well be the recipient, some say.

But if **building a missile defense system** at Fort Custer Training Center, which straddles the Kalamazoo and Calhoun county border line, makes us a bigger target for hostile enemies, maybe it's not such a great idea, others say.

### Col. Ron Wilson

Col. Ron Wilson, commander of the Battle Creek Air National Guard, talks about the missile defense system proposed by the U.S. Department of Defense. Fort Custer is among four sites being considered.

"I do not believe that this increases our target threat ability because Battle Creek has housed many or several federal DOD (U.S. Department of Defense) and other federal agencies over a long period of time," said Lt. Col. Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta. "This does not increase our threat."

The idea of building an intercontinental missile defense system -- called the Ground Based Interceptor Ballistic Missile Defense Mission -- is generating a fair amount of discussion as the Department of Defense considers Fort Custer and three of sites for the project.

"Currently the requirement is to establish a feasible location for a proposed construction of an East Coast-based

interceptor missile site," Gorzynski said. "Fort Custer is one of four locations going through an environmental impact study to determine the feasibility of the four locations should the need be required to deploy an East Coast-based missile system."

The intent is to build a system to protect the eastern United States from any attacking long-range missiles fired at the U.S. The system would "shoot a bullet with a bullet," the military has said. It would deploy fast-moving, interceptor missiles to impact and destroy any warheads shot at the U.S.

The non-weaponized interceptor missiles would strike incoming projectiles in outer space.

Economic development officials say the project will mean 300 new jobs directly and up to 1,800 jobs indirectly, pumping \$3.2 billion into Southwest Michigan's economy.

But some are questioning the expense and need for the system.

"This is a missile defense against who?" Russia?" reader **Holland Sparty** asked in online. "Last I checked they were the only ones with missiles capable of hitting U.S. soil."

Reader **David** took issue with assertions by longtime Kalamazoo city commissioner and associate professor of social work at Western Michigan University Don Cooney in a weekend story that missile defense systems don't work?

David wrote, "How about the Aegis Systems on navy cruisers and destroyers currently being used by Japan, S. Korea, Australia, Spain and the U.S. as well as land based systems in the U.S. and Europe? Do none of these work? Are they not providing jobs and supporting a local economy as well as jobs around the nation? Would you care to comment on the effectiveness of the Israel iron dome (missile defense) system currently being used in the recent conflict with Hamas?"

Military officials say the threat of attack in the coming years is real, that North Korea is looking to improve its missile attack capabilities and that Iran is working to develop missiles, including nuclear warheads.

"If we don't pay attention to it, it's going to sneak up and bite us one day, and it will be too late," said Col. Ron Wilson, commander of the Battle Creek Air National Guard.

### **Related Story: Take our poll: Should the U.S. build a missile defense system at Fort Custer?**

Gorzynski said, "Fort Custer is a strong candidate (for the missile defense system). It has two separate locations that meet the operation deployability requirements for the system, meaning we have enough territory to separately identify two potential construction sites to meet the environmental need for construction of a feasible location."

But he and others stressed that while the DOD is laying the groundwork for construction of a system, Congress

has not approved it.

Will international events have a big influence on whether the project goes forward or not?

Wilson said, "If you look at what's going on in Israel right now, that's a good key factor. At least it has to help (with the decision-making) because theirs (their missile defense system) has been very successful. It's a different system, different size and different scope. But just the fact that they have been able to save their citizens has to have some kind of impact. If you look at how world events are going right now, everywhere you turn ..."

The public is invited to attend meetings to provide input that the Missile Defense Agency and the Michigan Army National Guard will use to help put together an environmental impact study of the proposed missile defense project.

The study is expected to address a slate of issues that may be of concern to the communities involved. They include: safety, quality of life, labor-related issues, population increase and associated effects, the impact on recreation, traffic increase, utility requirements, availability and cost of civilian housing, noise, land use, visual and aesthetic issues, transportation, hazardous materials management and hazardous waste management.

Those wanting to offer input, or who want more information, have opportunities at:

-6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 26 in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly Plaza Hotel, 50 Capital Ave., SW in Battle Creek

-6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 28 in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.

During the meetings, called "public scoping," the public may:

- Review the description of the proposed action and alternatives;
- Ask questions and interact with subject matter experts;
- Identify issues of interest;
- Provide input to development of alternatives;
- Submit comments or provide oral comments to a court recorder;
- Sign up to receive more information.

*MLive Business writer **Al Jones** may be contacted at [ajones5@mlive.com](mailto:ajones5@mlive.com). Follow me on Twitter at [ajones5\\_al](https://twitter.com/ajones5_al).*

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Home » Articles » WOOD News » Missile System to be based outside Battle Creek?

# Missile System to be based outside Battle Creek?

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Posted Monday, August 25th 2014 @ 7am



Fort Custer outside Battle Creek is one of four sites under consideration as the home for an American Ant Missile defense system. If it was approved, defensive missiles would be based at Fort Custer standing ready to shoot down enemy missiles headed for the Eastern Half of the country.

The plan goes to a public hearing this evening at McCamy Place in Battle Creek. The public may comment between 6 and 9pm.

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## Comments

# Fort Custer missile base public hearings begin Tuesday

3:44 PM, Aug. 25, 2014



The permanent closure of a portion of Skyline Drive would open up space for a missile defense base west of the Fort Custer Air National Guard Base.

A A

Written by **Trace Christenson**

The first of two public hearings will be held Tuesday on a proposed missile defense system for Fort Custer.

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The Missile Defense Agency has been considering four sites to house up to 60 defensive missiles to compliment two other sites already installed on the East Coast.

Fort Custer Training Center is being considered as a possible site along with Fort Drum, N.Y.; Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center in Ohio and Portsmouth Training Area in Maine. ...

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St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Port Huron, MI
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Municipal lot across from Pine Shores St. Clair, MI
- Faculty Art Show: "Collectively Independent II"**  
St Clair County Community College Fine Arts Gallery Port Huron, MI

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# A Missile Base As An Economic Driver In West Michigan

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Posted Monday, August 25th 2014 @ 2pm by WOOD Radio news team

The Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek is one of four sites under consideration as the home for an intercontinental missile defense system.

If it was approved, defensive missiles would be based at Fort Custer standing ready to shoot down enemy missiles headed for the eastern half of the country. Calhoun County officials have said the project will have a \$3.2 (b) billion positive impact on the Southwest Michigan economy, including the addition of 300 new jobs directly and up to 1,800 jobs indirectly.

Opponents say it would signal a big movement toward further militarizing the United States. And it would make West Michigan a bigger target for hostile military and terrorist acts.

The Missile Defense Agency and the Michigan Army National Guard have planned public meetings to solicit input on the plan.

One will be held Tuesday evening at McCamly Place in Battle Creek. The public may comment between 6 and 9pm. A second public hearing will from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Sherman Lake YMCA in Augusta.

No decision has been made to build the system, but the Pentagon is required to study the possible locations.

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# Residents voice few concerns about missile project

Trace Christenson 9:39 p.m. EDT August 26, 2014



(Photo: Trace Christenson/The Enquirer)

Few who attended a public hearing had concerns about a proposed defensive missile project in Battle Creek.

"I am concerned about extermination of a species of homosapiens," said Joe Laurinec, 90, of Battle Creek. "I would vote for a go."

Laurinec and his wife, Virginia, were among about 75 people who attended an information program about a proposed \$3.1 billion missile site proposed for Fort Custer Training Facility. If approved by Congress and the Missile Defense Agency, about 60 defensive missiles would be installed in silos at the base.

Even if approved the project is years away, but the military is holding a pair of information programs this week.

The second public session is Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Great Hall at Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 North 39th St., Augusta.

Tuesday's session, held at McCamly Plaza Hotel, was informal and designed for people to walk at their own pace to discuss with officials several aspects of the proposed project.

Among a handful of residents, many city and county officials attended, including some members of the Battle Creek City Commission and the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners.

Representatives provided information about the possible sites, how the missile defense system is designed to work, the environmental impact study and how the site would look if Fort Custer is chosen.

David Gawlak of Battle Creek was not enamored with the presentation format, preferring a short presentation and then making officials available for questions.

But he did not have concerns about the project.

"It would be an asset to the community," he said, citing jobs for construction and personnel assigned to the site.

The military has estimated the site would require \$700 million in construction and employ about 300 people to build it.

And Karl Dehn, president and CEO of Battle Creek Unlimited, said he would expect "250 permanent full-time highly technical and well compensated" jobs would be created. Another 50 civilians and 1,800 spin-off jobs also are likely, he said.

"The economic impact is very large," he said. "It is a phenomenal opportunity for Battle Creek."

Like many other officials who attended the session, Dehn said he has heard little or no opposition to the site, perhaps because of Battle Creek's long history with the military and with several major employers connected to the military and federal government.

"This community gets it," Dehn said.

Mayor David Walters agreed.

He said the city commission has already voted to support the project and believes the community is supportive.

"The military is a part of the way of life in Battle Creek," he said. "We are used to having the military in Battle Creek."

Dave Powell, dean of Western Michigan University's College of Aviation based at W.K. Kellogg Airport, supports military and government spending in Michigan.

"It is time for them to come back and spend some money," he said. "The economy in Michigan needs a boost."

But he said the 10,000-foot runway at the airport, the available land and the work force are all reasons making Battle Creek a good fit.

George McNeil of Battle Creek supports the project “because Michigan has no air defense. So, heck yes, the way the Chinese and Russians are carrying on. My concern is that its not being put up fast enough.”

Call Trace Christenson at 966-0685. Follow him on Twitter: @TSChristenson.

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# Fort Custer missile base public hearings begin Tuesday

Trace Christenson, 11:52 a.m. EDT August 26, 2014



(Photo: John Grap/Enquirer file)

The first of two public hearings will be held Tuesday on a proposed missile defense system for Fort Custer.

The Missile Defense Agency has been considering four sites to house up to 60 defensive missiles to complement two other sites already installed on the East Coast.

Fort Custer Training Center is being considered as a possible site along with Fort Drum, N.Y.; Camp Ravenna Joint Military Training Center in Ohio and Portsmouth Training Area in Maine.

The selection and establishment of a missile defense site remains years away, said Jan Frantz, Director of Corporate Projects for Battle Creek Unlimited. The Missile Defense Agency has begun work on an Environmental Impact Statement at each of the sites and is accepting public comments about the proposed project.

The Battle Creek site would use about 1,300 acres north of I-94 and west of the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base.

The \$3.1 billion project would include \$700 million in new construction and employ 300 people.

The missiles are 55 feet long, are stored in silos, have a solid propellant and do not carry warheads. They are designed to destroy enemy missiles by colliding with them.

The public hearing Tuesday is 6-9 p.m. in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly Plaza Hotel, 50 Capital Ave. S.W.

The Thursday session is also 6-9 p.m. in the Great Hall at Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 North 39th St., Augusta.

Call Trace Christenson at 966-0685. Follow him on Twitter: @TSChristenson

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**Politics & Government**

8:05 PM TUE AUGUST 26, 2014

# Battle Creek military base may host U.S. missile base

By [STEVE CARMODY](#) (@PEOPLE/STEVE-CARMODY)

A decade from now, Battle Creek could be a key component of the nation's [missile defense program](#).

[http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/08/military\\_leaders\\_say\\_fort\\_cust.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/08/military_leaders_say_fort_cust.html)

Fort Custer is one of several sites in the eastern U.S. being reviewed for an expansion of [a missile interceptor system](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsIiBiD13Cs). (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsIiBiD13Cs>)

Lt. Colonel Chris Snipes says the missile defense system is the equivalent of "hitting a bullet with another bullet." It's been in development since the 1980s. Snipes says it's similar to the Iron Dome system the Israeli military has been using to stop rockets being fired from Gaza by Hamas.

But the U.S. missile defense system sets its sights higher.

Snipes says the focus of the Defense Department's Missile Defense Agency is now to prepare for the potential threat of intercontinental ballistic missiles from Iran and North Korea.

"North Korea has launched ... satellites into outer space. They have that technology and it's not a far leap to progress to the next level," says Snipes. "If we wait until those threats appear, we're too late to defend the homeland."

The Department of Defense - Missile Defense Agency held a public meeting last night in Battle Creek to get input on the potential environment impact of the project. A second public meeting is scheduled for Thursday.



Lt. Col. Mark Gorzynski is the commander of the Fort Custer Training Center. He would like to see the missile complex built in Battle Creek.

"It's going to be built somewhere to safeguard the homeland. It needs to be built in Fort Custer," says Gorzynski.

Gorzynski says the civilian and military personnel at the missile complex would be separate from the 2,500 full-time civilian and military employees at the base now.

[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201408/fort\\_custer\\_missile\\_082614\\_015.JPG](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201408/fort_custer_missile_082614_015.JPG)  
People at last night's public expressed some concern about making Battle Creek a military target.

But more were interested in the potential jobs the missile complex may deliver.  
*Credit Steve Carmody / Michigan Radio*

Defense Department officials say building the missile complex would create about 400 construction jobs.

Once the complex is up and running, Defense Department officials say between 1,200 and 1,800 civilian employees and military personnel would work at Fort Custer.

An environmental review of the potential site will take until probably mid-2016.

Lt. Col. Snipes says Congress has yet to approve funding for the missile complex. If it does, he says construction will take at least five years.

People at tonight's public expressed some concern about making Battle Creek a military target. But more were interested in the potential jobs the missile complex may deliver.

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## \$4 billion missile program at Fort Custer?

By Dani Carlson

Published: August 26, 2014, 11:19 pm | Updated: August 27, 2014, 12:30 am

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. (WOOD) — Fort Custer near Battle Creek is on the short list of places the U.S. Department of Defense Missile Defense Agency is considering to build a missile interceptor site.

If Fort Custer in Augusta is chosen, it would be home to dozens of missiles that would be launched to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles.

“From an intelligence standpoint, we’re investigating our threats, or our threat countries, and we’re mainly looking at the third-world rogue nations, those are our biggest threats,” said Lt. Col. Chris Snipes of the Missile Defense Agency, referring to countries like North Korea and Iran.

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The project worth between \$3 billion and \$4 billion would employ 400 construction workers, and create 1,200 and 1,800 permanent jobs once it's open. It initially calls for 20 interceptor missiles to be built. That number could rise as high as 60.

In the event of an attack, Snipes explained, the interceptor missiles would be fired to destroy long-range missiles — which have a range of 10,000 kilometers — while they are in space.

“In essence, we're hitting a bullet with a bullet in outer space,” Snipes said.

The U.S. already has two interceptor sites — one in Alaska and one in California.

Snipes said the program was similar to Israel's Iron Dome technology, just on a larger scale.

The Missile Defense Agency held a meeting in Battle Creek Tuesday to get input from the public about the possibility of building a site in West Michigan.

The potentially massive project is still in its very beginning stages: The feds are doing an environmental and community impact study of each of the four sites in the running for the project. The study alone will cost about \$4.5 million.

The actual site would be between five and seven years away from becoming a reality, after a 24-month impact report and three to five years of construction.

“If we start planning now and have a system in place for those threats that come in the future, then we're ahead of the game. If we wait until those threats appear, then we're behind our enemies and that's not a good thing,” Snipes said.

Fort Custer is among the finalists for the site — four narrowed down from more than 400 options. The base made it this far, 24 Hour News 8 was told, because of “critical performance requirements.” But when asked what those requirements consisted of, Snipes said “they're classified.”

Snipes did say that the property had to be owned by the U.S. government and have enough space to build the project without compromising the its original purpose.

If Fort Custer is chosen, it could bring new development and new jobs. But some neighbors are concerned about property values, accidents and even planned attacks.

“If we get this, are our enemies going to know if this is here or is this going to be top secret? It just kind of leaves us in the dark and we don't like being kept in the dark,” Teresa Gawlak, who has lived in the Cereal City for about 60 years, said. “[The project] could bring jobs, that's very true, but there are also jobs leaving Battle Creek for different reasons, and there's a lot of unsettlement and unsettling stuff going on.”

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# Big Turnout Reported In Last Public Meeting For Missile Defense Site

Wednesday, October 1, 2014, Watertown, NY



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Story Published: Aug 27, 2014 at 10:16 AM EDT  
(Story Updated: Aug 27, 2014 at 10:40 AM EDT)

It was a big turnout in Battle Creek, Michigan Tuesday night in the last of a series of public sessions on building a missile defense site to protect the East Coast from intercontinental ballistic missiles.

WOOD television reports Fort Custer near Battle Creek is one of four final sites being considered, narrowed down from over 400.

Residents there, the station says, are concerned about things like property values, accidents and attacks on the \$4 billion installation.

A similar forum in Carthage earlier this month drew little or no negative comment on locating the site at Fort Drum.

Congress hasn't decided if it will fund the facility, but military officials are getting the groundwork done in case they do.

If built, the project could create 400 to 600 construction jobs and 1,200 to 1,400 permanent jobs for military personnel, civilians and contractors.

Other sites in the running are in Maine and Ohio.



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## First of two Missile Base input sessions held in Battle Creek

Wednesday, August 27, 2014 6:42 a.m. EDT by John McNeill

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BATTLE CREEK (WKZO) -- The first of two community input meetings on efforts to attract an Anti-ballistic missile base to Fort Custer was held last night in Battle Creek.

The backers from Battle Creek Unlimited had information available and a court reporter there to take comments.

Battle Creek and three other sites are all interested in attracting the the base, which would mean construction and permanent jobs and another big injection of federal dollars into the local economy.

The Base already boats a highly sophisticated command and control center where operations in Africa can be overseen. It also about to be home for a squadron of drone pilots.

A second public input session will be held at the YMCA facility at Sherman Lake Thursday evening from 6 to 9 p.m.



## Proposed missile-defense system at Fort Custer gets first close-up look at public meeting

Loading Photo Gallery

**Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com** By **Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com**

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on August 27, 2014 at 6:12 AM, updated August 27, 2014 at 11:35 AM

**BATTLE CREEK, MI** – Civilian members of the U.S. Department of Defense, military leaders and support contractors worked Tuesday evening to explain a missile defense system that could be built in Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties.

As part of the long process to decide which of four military installations the U.S. Department of Defense should build an intercontinental

ballistic missile defense site to protect the eastern U.S., the Missile Defense Agency held the first of two public "scoping" sessions to answer questions from area people and invite them to provide input.

### **Lt. Col. Chris Snipes**

The program manager for the CONUS Interceptor Site for the Missile Defense Agency hosts an Aug. 26, 2014 meeting about the missile defense system at Fort Custer Training Center.

About 80 people spent time looking at poster illustrations of various aspects of the proposed project, watching a short video of how such a system works and questioning experts on Tuesday evening at McCamly Plaza Hotel in downtown Battle Creek.

A second gathering is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.

"The biggest thing (question) that a lot of folks had was whether it was armed," said Dane Kenney, chief engineer for the Missile Defense Agency's Ground Missile Ballistics.

The missiles that are to be used to shoot down any intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) fired at the United States, will not have an explosive element, said Kenney.

"We're a kinetic energy system ... that goes up and uses basic physics to destroy the inbound (ICBM)," he said.

The public sessions include no formal sit-down presentations. Visitors moved from one station to another to

hear about different aspects of **the proposed project**, starting with how it has progressed thus far and how the Missile Defense Agency is using such events here and at the three other proposed locations to put together environmental impact statements.

The other locations are in Maine, Ohio and New York state. Congress has not approved the project, but the Missile Defense Agency has the green light to investigate the possibilities.

The interceptor missiles are what the military calls strike-to-kill projectiles. They have been likened to shooting a bullet with a bullet, and their success rate, at just over 50 percent, has caused some **to question their effectiveness**.

Lt. Col. Chris Snipes, program manager for the Continental United States Interceptor Site for the Missile Defense Agency, has confidence in the system and the need for it.

"This system would be used only in the nation's defense," Snipes said. "If any missiles or interceptors are fired from this location it would be because someone is firing at us."

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The interceptors would destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles in outer space. Snipes said ICBMs need to travel that high to find and reach their targets.

The environmental impact statement that is being developed, which includes an assessment of the potential effect the project would have on the quality of life of area residents and on military personnel transferred here, is not expected to be completed for at least another 18 months.

There were no protestations, arguments or debates from those who attended the event.

Two tables with writing supplies were provided for those who wanted to express their thoughts and concerns in writing. A stenographer was also stationed in a quiet area to take down the thoughts, concerns and suggestions of anyone interested.

The event attracted any number of individuals who formerly worked at Fort Custer or had family connections there.

David Fruin of Battle Creek visited to learn what part or parts of the military training center were being considered and whether his business, a 112,000-square-foot records retention facility, just north and east of Fort Custer would be affected.

Two areas in the south and southwest portions of the mammoth training center grounds are being considered, and are far removed from his business.

"I think it's good for the community; the construction alone (and) the amount of concrete they're going to pour to produce these things," Fruin said, referring to the 75-foot-deep concrete, in-the-ground silos that will house 20 to 60 interceptor missiles.

Construction of the project has been estimated to be about \$700 million and the MDA estimates that the region-wide economic impact of the project will be about \$3.2 billion, including 300 jobs directly and up to 1,800 jobs that support the project.

Fruin's wife, Kim, said she thought the event did a good job of presenting information.

"I think it's a fantastic opportunity for growth and jobs in Battle Creek," Kim Fruin said.

Among the many questions remaining to be answered are such things as how the project will safeguard the area's water systems and air.

Safeguarding the air includes more than the air quality. It includes how the project, which will have a secured no-fly zone above it, will reroute commercial air traffic on the busy travel routes between Detroit, Chicago, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and all parts south. Aircraft would have to fly around the missile defense zone.

Sandy Nordmark is concerned about how the project, which is expected to involve clear-cutting about 1,300 acres of trees and flattening what is now hilly terrain in the southern part of Fort Custer, will ensure that ground water and surface water are not contaminated.

"What we're really concerned about is ground water," said Nordmark, a Ph.D in fishery and wildlife administration who worked at Fort Custer before retiring several years ago and who has worked as a consultant. "Fort Custer is unique. The southeast corner, near I-94, has a tremendous amount of surface and groundwater, fed by a big area."

She said it supplies wells in a large area.

"I want to make sure they map those areas and understand how wide-ranging the influence would be if they disturbed, interrupted or destroyed that flow," Nordmark said.

Recharging a groundwater system is a slow process and once a groundwater system is contaminated, is it very difficult to decontaminate, she said.

"Battle Creek has a rich military heritage at Fort Custer and I believe this will be a great addition to our military presence in the area," said Thomas Charron, who retired in 2009 from the 110th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard adjacent to Fort Custer at the W.K. Kellogg Airport. He was a master sergeant.

He said he thinks building such a system is wise particularly to deter unpredictable adversaries such as Iran and North Korea.

"If we make it doubly difficult for them to succeed in attacking our cities, it would pause them long enough so we would be able to push toward a peaceful resolution to whatever problem that might arise between our two nations," he said. "It would pause them for a diplomatic resolution between two nations."

But he said, "Diplomacy is only as effective as the force that backs it up and the will to use it."

His wife, Maryanne Charron, a retired school teacher, said, "My main concern was ... the impact on the environmental quality."

But she said she likes the idea of what the project would do to help the Battle Creek area economy.

Jayne Wilson, of Battle Creek, said, "I wanted to know what they're looking to make Fort Custer look like. They had maps of how it could be laid out, and the facility, and how it's going to look compared to the community."

But she said a lot is still undecided and she wants to know more about the jobs that might result from the project.

Wilson retired from the Air National Guard this past year after 27 years of service. She now works for another federal agency.

She said she is concerned about the project raising Fort Custer's visibility and potentially making it a bigger target for enemies. "All you have to do is watch the news everyday to be concerned," she said.

But she said site selection and environmental study is a long process and "after that, they said they may ask for another whole year of study."

She said, "I'm not against it. I definitely think Battle Creek could use the jobs and I would like to see how that would better our area."

### **What do you think?**

Through Tuesday, a totally unscientific MLive poll asking readers if they think a missile system should be built at Fort Custer, resulted in 949 votes in favor (66.69 percent of the voters) to 156 votes against (22.35 percent). Readers who said they needed more information, cast 156 votes (10.96 percent).

You can access and take the poll by clicking **here**.

*MLive Business writer **Al Jones** may be contacted at **ajones5@mlive.com**. Follow me on Twitter at **ajones5\_al**.*

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## Five keys points about the proposed missile defense system project at Fort Custer Training Center

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**Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com** By **Al Jones | ajones5@mlive.com**

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on August 28, 2014 at 12:45 PM, updated August 28, 2014 at 1:52 PM

**KALAMAZOO, MI** – The U.S. Department of Defense continues its effort to study the Fort Custer Training Center as a possible site for a new ground-based missile defense system.

That included a public "scoping" session on **Tuesday evening** to glean input on the project. It was held in downtown Battle Creek.

The second of two public sessions planned thus far is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. today (Thursday, Aug. 28) in The Great Hall at the Sherman Lake YMCA, 6225 N. 39th St. in Augusta.

The 7,500-acre Fort Custer military training center straddles Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties. **Officials have said** building the missile defense project there will pump \$3.2 billion into the region's economy, adding 300 jobs directly and supporting up to 1,800 others indirectly.

The system involves using ground-based, nonweaponized missiles to destroy any intercontinental ballistic missiles shot at the eastern United States. The military sees such nations as North Korea and Iran as potential threats for hostilities in the future.

Congress has not approved the project but the Department of Defense has the green light to investigate where it would put the system. Along with military installations in Maine, Ohio and New York state, Fort Custer is one of four sites it is considering.

**Here are five takeaways from the effort thus far:**

**-It will be a long process** – The DOD's Missile Defense Agency has budgeted up to two years to compile environmental impact studies of the four sites it is considering.

**-The military is alright with the system** -- Military leaders do not wince at the idea that its system, called the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system, has been shown to work only about 50 percent of the time. **Lt. Col. Mark Gorzynski**, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center, said the system currently has about a 50 percent hit-to-kill ratio but is still being developed. He said destroying even half of any inbound missiles shot at

the U.S. is better than taking out none.

**-Experts will be needed** -- Professionals will be needed to research the air, ground, archeological and biological effects the project may have on the Fort Custer area. The area is a unique land mass. Additional development there will impact the air, land and water.

**-The camping will still be good** -- Although a missile defense site would be highly secured and inaccessible to the general public if it is built at Fort Custer, no plans have been announced to make changes at the Fort Custer recreational area or other surrounding properties.

**-Armchair quarterbacks won't help this process** – The Missile Defense Agency and the Michigan Army National Guard are soliciting input from people -- pro and con -- to put together an environmental impact study of the proposed project. Many people have reasoned, valuable points of view, but many will do nothing to officially add their voice. The consulting group overseeing the process for the DOD is making writing materials and a stenographer available to collect input at the public gatherings.

### **If you go**

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton is to be among those in attendance Thursday evening. The St. Joseph Republican is expected to be there at about 7 p.m. after touring the two areas in the southern portion of Fort Custer that could be utilized for the project. Part of the study is to determine which of the two areas is more suitable.

During Thursday's meeting, the public has the opportunity to:

- Review descriptions of the proposed action and alternatives;
- Ask questions and interact with subject matter experts;
- Identify issues of interest;
- Provide input to development of alternatives;
- Submit comments or provide oral comments to a court recorder;
- Sign up to receive more information.

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## Proposed ballistic missile base at Ft Custer gets another public hearing

Friday, August 29, 2014 8:18 a.m. EDT

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AUGUSTA, MI (WTVB) - It could be “Star Wars” right next door. Branch County Commissioners next month are expected to consider a resolution of support for a proposal to put a ballistic missile defense facility near Augusta at Fort Custer, rather than at three other sites. The Missile Defense Agency took comments last night in Augusta.

This project would mean the investment in billions in construction dollars for the area and 1,200 permanent paychecks. Lt. Colonel Chris Snipes concedes that right now, no other country that might want to attack us currently has the missiles to launch a strike. There were comments in opposition, calling it a gigantic waste of money, promoting war rather than spending the funds on people needs.

Congressman Fred Upton says this site may have the edge in the competition for the base, because of the quality of life here and fewer taxpayer dollars required because of lower costs in Southwest Michigan. It will take two years to pick a site, and 3 to 5 years to build it, unless some better missile killing technology comes along.

Communities in Ohio, New York and Maine also want the project if it's ever approved by Congress.



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## Missile base a good idea, but not everyone is sold

Friday, August 29, 2014 5:23 a.m. EDT by John McNeill

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SHERMAN LAKE (WKZO) -- It could be "Star Wars" right next door.

The Missile Defense Agency took comment last on a proposal to put a ballistic missile defense facility at Fort Custer, rather than at three other proposed sites.

It would mean over 3 billion dollars in new construction, and 12-hundred permanent paychecks coming into the region.

Lt. Colonel Chris Snipes says this is just the early planning. All four of the finalist sites, including locations in Ohio, New York State and Maine meet the basic specs for a location for such a global defense system, saying the criterion is classified.

What they are trying to figure out now is where it would be accepted, supported, and the best place for employees on the base to live.

He says the missiles do not carry any warheads or explosives. They fly into space and take out the incoming missiles by crashing into them.

He says its like aiming a bullet at an incoming bullet.

Molly Mechtenberg gave comment for the record opposing the idea of locating missiles at Fort Custer, not because it might make us a target or because she wants to give peace a chance, but rather because she thinks the country has more pressing problems right now.

She says a 3-billion dollar missile base,using technology that doesn't work, is a misuse of taxpayers dollars when there are bigger priorities.

Congressman Fred Upton attended last night's public meeting. He says with both Iran and North Korea developing intercontinental capability and ISIS sitting on a lot of cash, he thinks it's a good idea to plan ahead.

'Upton thinks Fort Custer would be an attractive location to the Pentagon because of the quality of life and the cost of living in the area.

He also thinks it would be less expensive to build it here.

The Input session was held at the YMCA Sherman Lake Campsite last evening.

Snipes says it will take two years to pick a site, and three to five years to build it, unless some better missile-killing technology comes along.

for more information: [www.mda.mil/about/enviro\\_cis.html](http://www.mda.mil/about/enviro_cis.html)



## Resolution supporting missile defense system at Fort Custer OK'd by Kalamazoo County Board

county board sept 2.JPG

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution voicing support for a proposed ballistic missile defense system at Fort Custer during their meeting Tuesday. *(Alex Mitchell | Kalamazoo Gazette)*

**Alex Mitchell | amitch5@mlive.com** By **Alex Mitchell | amitch5@mlive.com**

on September 02, 2014 at 8:45 PM, updated September 03, 2014 at 2:02 PM

**KALAMAZOO, MI** — A proposed **ballistic missile defense system** for Fort Custer received the support of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners Tuesday.

The board voted to approve a resolution stating it is in favor of the proposed development, with commissioner Carolyn Alford, D-Kalamazoo, absent. Commissioners Julie Rogers, D-Kalamazoo Township, and John Taylor, D-Kalamazoo, both abstained.

### Hear comments from citizens for and against proposed Fort Custer missile defense system

A number of citizens spoke both for and against a proposed missile defense system for Fort Custer prior to Kalamazoo County commissioners approving a resolution voicing support for the project at their meeting Tuesday. Watch comments from two detractors and one supporter given during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Fort Custer, a 7,500-acre training base for the U.S. Army Reserves and other branches of the military that straddles Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties, is one of four locations currently undergoing an environmental impact study that will be used to partially determine the area best suited for the project.

The resolution doesn't mean Kalamazoo County will be chosen for the development, but instead serves to show the federal government that county representatives are on board with the missile system if Fort Custer is selected to receive it.

**MORE: View the resolution approved by the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners [PDF]**

Prior to the vote, commissioners heard comments from a string of citizens, the majority of whom opposed the installation by saying it furthers the agenda of war culture in the U.S.

"I think we need to think not about the jobs, but about the project itself, about what it does, about whether it helps to protect us, whether it helps to protect our freedoms; or whether it actually creates more tension in the

world, more militarism in the world," said Harold Beu during the public comment portion of the meeting.

The missile defense system would involve 20 to 60 non-weaponized missiles, according to Lt. Col Mark Gorzynski, commander of the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta. They are hit-to-kill missiles that don't carry an explosive element. Each would be about 55 feet long and weigh 22 to 27 tons, and would be launched from in-the-ground, double-cement silos.

Jan Frantz, director of corporate projects for Battle Creek Unlimited, the city's economic development organization, **told commissioners at their Sept. 2 meeting** that the project is expected to have a \$3.2 billion positive economic impact on the region's economy, according to the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. That is expected to include 300 additional jobs in the area.

Beu's statements were echoed by several others, but it ultimately was not enough to sway commissioners, most of whom said that while they may not support the philosophy of increasing the militarization of the country, they recognize the economic boon brought on by the development would be too significant to pass on.

"I wish there was a better way to spend money ... but the reality is the military just doesn't give the money back," said commissioner Michael Seals, D-Kalamazoo. "They are going to find somewhere to build this facility whether we like it or not. I have to support this because I know economically, this is the right thing to do."

Board vice chair David Buskirk, offered similar statements in support of the development and said he hopes local union employees will be hired to perform some of the construction of the system if it comes to Kalamazoo County.

Vietnam war veteran Wade Adams said he understood the commissioner's position that the development will likely go somewhere else if it's not placed at Fort Custer, but he still urged them to vote "no" to voice to the federal government that the money could be better spent on needs like infrastructure or education.

"You can say somebody else is going to take this money, but this money should not be going toward boondoggle projects that are destroying the earth," Adams said.

Other detractors said that missile defense systems have too low of a success rate to be considered a viable development and that the system could potentially make Kalamazoo County a target for future attacks, to name a few of the concerns raised.

Alfred Sarquiz, a Korean war veteran, was one of the few citizens to offer support of the board's decision prior to the vote. Sarquiz pointed out that the military is the reason why the community had the opportunity to debate this decision.

"We would not be here exercising our freedom of speech except for the military," Sarquiz said. "I think there's four communities that are in the run for this missile defense system and if we stick our head in the sand, it's going to go in in one of these other three communities."

After hearing the public comments, commissioner John Zull, R-Portage, offered his rationale for supporting the development, saying the world isn't as safe as some would think and that it's defense systems such as this one that help keep the peace.

"We heard a lot of people with passion express some fear, but I don't think that I can agree that that fear is realistic in a sense that I wish the world was noble," Zull said. "I wish all people were as noble as what you seem to think more of than I do.

"It's hard for me to say you're wrong ... but I think you're wrong and I think that's what's gotten the world in trouble from time to time -- the most noble of us want to trust everybody too much."

*Alex Mitchell covers county government and taxes for the Kalamazoo Gazette. Email him at **amitch5@mlive.com** or follow him on **Twitter**.*

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## If U.S. builds another missile defense system, build it at Fort Custer (Kalamazoo Gazette editorial)

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**Julie Mack | [jmack1@mlive.com](mailto:jmack1@mlive.com)** By **Julie Mack | [jmack1@mlive.com](mailto:jmack1@mlive.com)**

on September 05, 2014 at 6:00 AM, updated September 05, 2014 at 8:27 AM

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday to **endorse a proposal** to locate a proposed U.S. ballistic missile defense system Fort Custer in Augusta.

The benefits are obvious: The system would result in **300 well-paying jobs**, and an analysis by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research indicates the project would have a \$3.2 billion economic impact on the region's economy.

However, opponents say the federal government has much better ways to spend its money, and they question the effectiveness of missile defense systems.

We strongly agree with the county board's endorsement.

It is important to recognize there are two levels of debate to this discussion.

One is whether the U.S. needs another U.S. ballistic missile defense system site in addition to the systems already installed in California and Alaska. The Department of Defense has not yet signed off on the idea, nor has Congress provided funding.

The second question is the system's location. **Fort Custer** is one of four sites under consideration.

We acknowledge the **legitimate questions** about whether building a third missile defense system is the best use of federal dollars. This is an issue that Congress needs to carefully consider.

But that decision won't be made by officials here, nor is it the question put before the Kalamazoo County Board. Rather, they are being asked to support locating the system at Fort Custer, if one is to be built.

The fact is, if Southwest Michigan rejects the project, it would simply go elsewhere, along with the economic benefits it would bring. It would be foolhardy to turn away that opportunity.

An analogy is the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. Republicans fiercely opposed the ACA, but once it became law, Michigan's GOP lawmakers -- to their credit -- agreed to the Medicaid expansion,

recognizing that continuing to stand on principle would hurt more than help Michigan citizens.

In the case of the missile system, the federal government is not offering Southwest Michigan a menu of options for billion-dollar development projects. There is one specific proposal on the table. The question is: Yes or no, would we want it here?

The answer is yes.

*This is an editorial from the Kalamazoo Gazette. For more Kalamazoo Gazette opinion pieces and letters visit <http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/>.*

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