

## A rollercoaster ride

It has been a rollercoaster ride during the seven years since BRAC was first announced and the community learned that the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant was to be shut down. The local leadership who met the first afternoon of the announcement could never have imagined how wild the ride would be.

Nor could they have imagined how long it would take.

Numerous times staff and board thought they were just days away from being at the off-load of the rollercoaster, only to find that they were once again laboring up yet another hill.

The closing days of June provided the most recent example. This time, with an ac-

tual closing ceremony set at the Corps of Engineers' office in D.C., the transfer came to a screeching halt due to the delay in having a signature-ready contract for environmental remediation to be performed by Great Plains.

The importance of that document cannot be underestimated. Great Plains' board has long contended that it would not take title to the property without also having the financial and contractual ability to control remediation. That would insure that the best properties could be cleaned up and marketed first, rather than others deciding their focus might be on property farther away from infrastructure, and therefore less developable.

When it came right down to signing the paperwork for transfer on June 29, the deed was in order, as was the bill of sale. But the Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement had some final tweaks that simply couldn't be worked out in time.

Holding onto its long-held commitment to not put the community at risk by owning property over which it held little control, the board did not take action to authorize signature on the deed, thereby postponing the closing.

That was a bold move, but it was the right one.

Great Plains' board of directors is a county commission-appointed governing body of local business and profes-

sional people. The members' job is to represent the best interest of the citizens, and they have proven that they will do that.

The rollercoaster ride will end, and it will end very quickly; but it won't end until all the "i"s are dotted and the "t"s are crossed, in a manner that is in the best interest of the county's population.

And in reality, while the delays have been terribly frustrating, when the transfer does finally occur, the country's economy will be in a better place for a new industrial park to open than it would have been two years ago. While still frustrating, that makes the delays in transfer somewhat less painful.

GPDA board members illustrated left to right: ex-officials: Rob Riggins, Craig VanWey, and Brian Kinzie; other board members: Pete Rhodes, Steve Lewis, George Knox, Carolyn Kennett, Gary Beachner, James McCarty, Montie Taylor, Dan Peterson, and Bob Wood.



The Great Plains Development Authority (GPDA) is a quasi-municipal organization charged with the redevelopment of the former Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, Parsons, Kansas.

# Shhh...

While we can't share the names of industrial prospects that knock on our door, what they do or when they come through, it is important that citizens remember that every resident is an ambassador of the community.

Will the stranger at the convenience store or restaurant be judging the community based on the comments of the clerk behind the counter? It's entirely possible.

The rebuilding of lost jobs won't happen overnight, but with everyone's help, it will happen!

# GPDA as caretaker

Effective Jan. 1, Great Plains took over as the Army's caretaker for about 6,100 acres, most of which will be transferred to the redevelopment authority shortly. Caretaker operations were previously handled by Day & Zimmermann, the private contractor-operator.

With Great Plains' contract the operation of the water and wastewater treatment plants moved, as well as security. Labette County Sheriff's De-

partment was subcontracted to manage the gate and provide random roving patrols on the grounds.

At the beginning of July, Great Plains took over operation of the gate and hired Dustin Holmes and Delmar Webb for that purpose.

Additional staff was hired to carry out various maintenance functions. They include chief of maintenance Tim Peoples, chief operator of water and waste water Steve Marshall,

and maintenance personnel Martin Bartholomew and Austin Revell.

Once the Army and Great Plains close on the property's sale, the authority will continue as caretaker for the Administration Building and 10 surrounding acres, until such time that it is sold.

Plans for the sale of the administration building are still being developed, but it is anticipated to be put up for public auction.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Bob Wood**

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**Dan Peterson**

Vice-chairman

**Montie Taylor**

Secretary/Treasurer

**James McCarty**

Past Chairman

**Gary Beachner**

**Carolyn Kennett**

**George Knox**

**Steve Lewis**

**Pete Rhodes**

—EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS—

**Brian Kinzie**

Labette Co. Commissioner

**Rob Riggan**

KS Dept. of Wildlife & Parks

**Craig VanWey**

KS Dept. of Commerce

## STAFF

**Daniel Goddard**

Chief Executive Officer

**Ann Charles**

Deputy Director

**Larry Hastings**

Property Manager

**Marti Morris**

Office Manager



**Marshall**

Chief Water/Sewer



**Peoples**

Chief Maintenance



**Bartholomew**

Maintenance



**Revell**

Maintenance



**Webb**

Security



**Holmes**

Security

## FROM THE PAST...



This aerial photo shows the old wood-frame administration building as well as the new earth-mounded secure facility (on the left) as employees moved from one to the other.

If you have a historical photo, please call or email: 620-421-1228 or [mmorris@parsonssks.com](mailto:mmorris@parsonssks.com).

# Decon and demolition

The explosive decontamination of buildings in the 900 Area is now complete and the pre- and post- photos below give a glimpse of how the landscape at the industrial park will change in the coming few years.

The only thing remaining to do in the area is the graveling of concrete foundation blocks and the remediation of the underlying soil.

Eleven buildings inside 900 were demolished, ranging from vacuum houses as small as 71 sq ft to the melt-pour building (Bldg 905) at 22,664 sq ft.

Two of the buildings in 900 offer excellent potential for future occupants and a couple of prospects have already eagerly touted their interest once the property is available for lease.

The 920 building was constructed for office use and storage, offering more than 27,000 sq ft of open-span, rail-connected space. Next door to that is 904 with more than 18,000 sq ft.

An update on other production areas and their status will follow as the process continues.



The melt kettles from building 905 were salvaged during the demolition process and have been decontaminated. Although weighing about 5,000 lbs each, they will be relocated to the Scott Rd entry and used in the landscaping.

*If you have suggestions for content or questions about the transfer process, please contact us.*



**Prior to  
demolition**



**After  
demolition**



# Transfer is logical

FROM THE CEO'S DESK



Daniel Goddard,  
Chief Executive Officer

There are some people in our community who wonder if it is worth continuing the transfer of Army property at the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant (KSAAP) to the Great Plains Development Authority (GPDA) and most recently an editorial in our local newspaper concluded "Maybe we ought to just let the Army keep the place..." Anyone who has followed or been involved with the transfer process understands how complicated it really is, but we can't afford to walk away.

Just over seven years ago, this community committed to seizing an opportunity to acquire a large portion of the KSAAP (6,800 acres). We are now at the end of the process. Agreements are in place with the environmental regulators, the Army Corps of Engineers is actively involved in clean-up, and the deed is ready for signature. There is just one more document to complete, the Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement, which provides for the GPDA to be in charge of the explosive decontamination of the abandoned production lines and to direct our environmental program manager which areas should be cleaned first.

We admit there have been setbacks and recognize this project will test our ability to manage and improve the infrastructure of

the former KSAAP. However, the GPDA has taken a business based approach in the development of the KSAAP into the Great Plains Industrial Park. Everyone needs to understand this is a very long term project, but the resulting development will benefit the entire Southeast Kansas region. The GPDA board members are all residents of Labette County with a positive vision of the future and understand the opportunity to develop business and employment opportunities as well as increase the tax base for Labette County. They are all volunteers with a collective expertise ranging from private business, transportation, higher education, banking, insurance, agriculture, and land title to economic development. If the Army put a lock on the gate, nothing would develop and the entire KSAAP would become a blight on the community - no investment, no jobs, and no tax revenue. We will not let that happen.

We understand the frustration of some people who are not familiar with the transfer process. We get frustrated too but, we make every effort to deal with the frustration in a constructive manner. We invite anyone who would like to learn more about the process of land transfer and opportunities for the future to attend our meetings. They are open to the public and generally occur on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 8:00AM in the Parsons Municipal Building Commission Room. Our community has been dealt blows in the past and has responded with energy and enthusiasm. We, the GPDA and many citizens of this community, are dedicated to making a positive contribution to Labette County, Parsons, and all of Southeast Kansas as we complete the acquisition of the property and concentrate on business and industrial development.

GREAT PLAINS  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
1209 CORPORATE DRIVE #6  
PARSONS, KS 67357

TO:

A vertical banner for the Great Plains Industrial Park. It features a collage of images including a gear, a landscape, and industrial buildings. The text "GREAT PLAINS INDUSTRIAL PARK" is written vertically in large, bold letters. Below it, the tagline "EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITY" is written in smaller letters. At the bottom, the website "www.greatplainsindustrialpark.com" is listed. On the left side, the email address "email: mmorris@parsonsksk.com" is written vertically.