

## FORT CARSON

**POST HEADS FOR 30,000**By **TOM ROEDER** THE GAZETTE

Fort Carson will add 4,877 soldiers by 2013, pushing its active-duty population to nearly 30,000 and pumping millions of dollars into local coffers, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

The move will place a newly formed infantry brigade and supporting troops at the post. It will mean tens of millions of dollars in construction and will add to the building boom at Fort Carson, which was already slated to grow by 10,000 soldiers by 2010.

It could bring as much as an extra \$250 million per year to Colorado businesses and create more than 3,000 civilian jobs, economists estimated.

"I'm excited," said U.S. Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colo., after getting the news from Army Undersecretary Keith Eastin. "This is great news."

The Pentagon said Colorado Springs and Fort Carson got the nod for more troops because a primary consideration was quality of life.

"We made a hard look at where we can station this force — not just the soldiers but the family members — and give them a quality of life that equals their quality of service to the nation," Army Gen. Richard Cody, the service's vice chief of staff, said at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

The Army said the decision was not tied to its proposal to expand the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site in southeast Colorado, which has pitted ranchers and politicians against the Defense Department.

While Army officials say they still covet more land, lawmakers say the move Wednesday shows they aren't unhappy with what they already own in Colorado.

"Obviously this was a vote of confidence for Fort Carson as it stands now," Lamborn said.

With troops already moving to Fort Carson from Fort Hood, Texas, under a 2005 decision by the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and the newly announced addition, Fort Carson will become one of the largest installations in the Army.

It will be home to five combat brigades, two division headquarters units, a Special Forces group and a slew of support troops.

The growth will also add thousands of military family members to Colorado Springs, with an estimated 7,500 accompanying the nearly 5,000 troops.

Fort Carson was supposed to get a large influx of troops this year, but the moves were delayed by the Army's needs for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Commanders say additional soldiers and families could start arriving as soon as next summer as soldiers begin arriving to fill out a division headquarters unit and a 4th Infantry Division brigade combat team.

More will arrive at Fort Carson after they complete a combat tour in Iraq, sometime in 2009.

Col. Gene Smith, Fort Carson's garrison commander, said the bulk of the new brigade will arrive by 2011, and the entire unit will be based at the post by 2013.

The Army is growing nationwide to accommodate the increasing pace of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The service is adding 65,000 soldiers, including six brigade combat teams.

The type of wars the Army is fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan has driven a critical need for infantry troops like those coming to Fort Carson who specialize in mountainous terrain and urban environments.

Other posts getting large units are Fort Stewart, Ga., and Fort Bliss, Texas.

Fort Carson officials said they're getting ready for growth and have initial ideas about where they can house the extra troops.

But specifics on how the growth will be accommodated are weeks away.

The latest announcement will continue an overhaul of Fort Carson, which will more than double in size from the 14,500 troops it housed when the Iraq war began in 2003.

The post already had launched nearly \$1 billion in new construction to house the additional troops it was slated to get.

With Wednesday's Pentagon announcement, U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., said that \$400 million in additional construction at the post will be needed.

Area politicians have been pushing for more troops at Fort Carson since the last increase was announced in 2005.

But those hopes seemed to be dimming as ranchers and lawmakers joined to derail the proposed expansion of the Piñon Canyon training area east of Trinidad.

That proposal to add 418,000 acres to the 235,000-acre training area, which the Army said was needed to train the new soldiers at the post, was put on hold for a year by Congress.

Lawmakers blocked expenditures on additional land for 2008 and required more impact studies before it can again be considered.

The Army has said moves to restrict growth of the training area would make Colorado less attractive for housing more soldiers.

In recent weeks, politicians including Lamborn, Salazar and Sen. Wayne Allard have lobbied to get the additional soldiers.

Allard said Army training needs will be met.

"The news of a new brigade at Fort Carson also carries with it a responsibility of ensuring that these soldiers are provided with the best possible facilities to fulfill their mission," he said in a news release. "I look forward to working with the other members of the Colorado congressional delegation to ensure that we provide these soldiers with the necessary training facilities."

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## **GROWTH AT FORT CARSON**

Fort Carson will grow to 30,000 soldiers by 2013 under a plan announced Wednesday. Here's a look at the past, present and projected active-duty population and number of brigades over a 10-year cycle:

### **2003:**

14,500 soldiers, two brigade combat teams.

### **2007:**

17,500 soldiers, three brigade combat teams.

### **2010:**

24,500 soldiers, four brigade combat teams.

### **2013:**

30,000 soldiers, five brigade combat teams.

## **IMPACT OF GAINING A BRIGADE**

4,900  
more troops  
400  
more civilian jobs  
\$249  
million in business income  
\$342.6  
million in total payroll  
7,950  
total jobs  
\$20.5  
million of state and local taxes

## **ARMY REORGANIZATION**

As the Army moves to grow by 65,000 active-duty soldiers by 2013, officials Wednesday mapped out decisions to add combat brigades and support units around the country, as well as an agreement to delay moving two brigades out of Germany until 2012-2013. Every Army installation across the country will get more soldiers — from a few to thousands.

### **Cost:**

\$66.4 billion in 743 military construction projects through 2013.

### Posts:

Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Carson; and Fort Stewart, Ga., each get new combat brigades. A brigade is generally about 3,500 soldiers.

### Germany:

One of the brigades in Germany will move to Fort Bliss in 2012; a second will move from Germany to White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico in 2013.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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**MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE FILE** - The Pentagon plans to send 4,877 soldiers to Fort Carson by 2013, in addition to 10,000 moving to the post by 2010. Economists say the 4,877 soldiers could mean \$250 million per year for state businesses.



**THE GAZETTE FILE** - Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team passed for review at Pershing Field at Fort Carson in September 2005. Sen. Ken Salazar says Wednesday's Pentagon announcement means Carson will require \$400 million in additional post construction.