



# NEWS RELEASE

## United States Air Force

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### **Former Myrtle Beach AFB Soars to New Heights Air Force and South Carolina Celebrate Base Transfer**

MYRTLE BEACH, SC. – The Air Force together with the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority, will celebrate the final property transfer of former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base and commemorating its over 50 years of Air Force service during a ceremony today at the Base Recreation Center. Honorable Luke Rankin, Chairman of the Horry County Legislative Delegation, Liz Gilland, Horry County Council Chair, and John Rhodes, Mayor of Myrtle Beach are among the keynote speakers at the event. The former base was closed under the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1991 and officially closed in 1993.

"Myrtle Beach's history as a military town lives on, even if the Myrtle Beach Air Force base is no more," said Myrtle Beach Mayor John B. Rhodes. "For 50 years, we were home to the men, women and machinery of the U.S. Air Force and its predecessors. We are enormously thankful to the Air Force Real Property Agency for overseeing such a graceful and generous transition following the base's closure in 1993. The vision that we had for the property then has been fully realized today."

The former base consisted of 3,937 acres and since closure has been transferred to the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority, Horry County, and several other organizations. Redevelopment includes an international airport, The Market Common urban village, residential development and other commercial facilities. Tenants include the American Red Cross, Horry-Georgetown Technical College and Allied Healthcare.

"This transfer represents the final milestone in Myrtle Beach's transformation into a vital

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economic engine for South Carolina,” said Robert Moore, Director of the Air Force Real Property Agency. “Myrtle Beach Air Force Base has a long, proud history of service to our nation. Now it serves the local community, providing it with a new commercial air terminal, over 1,200 homes, more than 300,000 square feet of commercial space, health care facilities, and multiple park and recreation facilities.”

“I grew up loving the roar of jets flying overhead. It was one of the familiar sounds of summer at the beach - and the air base and those who lived and worked there were an integral part of our community,” said Liz Gilland, Horry County Council Chair. “When we learned that our base was to be closed, the community feared an insurmountable economic loss. That was then -- but look at us now! The success we have had in revitalizing a closed Air Force base is nearly unmatched in this country -- and we couldn't be prouder.”

Although the Air Force will no longer be a landowner at Myrtle Beach, it will continue to complete the environmental cleanup. Remedy optimization has been implemented at several sites, and to date the Air Force has spent \$60.1 million to clean up a variety of environmental sites. Of the original 192 sites in the Installation Restoration Program, only 16 remain open.

“I want to thank the AFRPA, the Environmental Protection Agency and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control for their outstanding efforts in getting the former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base property removed from federal ownership,” said Robert L. Castles, Jr., Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority Chair. “Through these agencies efforts, the property is now owned by public bodies and private businesses that will enhance the local tax base, create jobs and contribute to an improved quality of life.”

Established in 1940, Myrtle Beach AFB began as a training base and was also used for coastal patrols during World War II. The 354th Fighter Wing/Tactical Fighter Wing, based there from 1956 to 1993, deployed squadrons in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, with major service in Lebanon, Germany, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf.

The Air Force Real Property Agency is responsible for remediation and property transfer at 40 former Air Force installations throughout the U.S. under the Base Realignment and Closure program. At the height of the BRAC process, AFRPA managed 87,000 acres, or about 137 square miles of property. In the two decades since the first BRAC round in 1988, the agency has transferred 89 percent, or more than 116 square miles of land – twice the area of Washington, D.C. – back to communities for public use. Throughout the transfer process, the Air Force remains committed to protecting human health and the environment.