

# Industry forum outlines base housing plan

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More than 100 potential developers from across the United States took part in an industry forum to learn about Langley Air Force Base's Bethel Manor housing privatization project Tuesday at the Omni Hotel in Newport News.

The focus of the forum was to provide the developers the information they would need to compete for the project, to include the desired features for the new community and the homes in it, as well as to allow them a first-hand view of the Bethel Manor housing area.

"We're very excited about this project and look forward to it," said Col. William Bledsoe, 1st Fighter Wing vice commander, in his opening remarks to the forum. "Our airmen work, deploy and fight for our nation and they deserve better housing ... Bethel Manor housing is definitely not up to our standards."

Bethel Manor housing, which currently consists of 1,268 housing units, was built predominately in the 1960s and 1970s. In the housing privatization project proposal, the Air Force is requesting that the potential developer demolish all the units, except for 148 which were built in 1998, and build 1,049 new units.

The reduced amount of overall housing units is due to the latest Housing Requirements Market Analysis, which



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Travis Aston

**Beverly Noffsinger and Tech. Sgt. Therese Middleton check out the kitchen of a base housing unit during the industry forum Tuesday.**

projected Langley will have a reduced need for on-base housing by 2008.

However, in an effort to take care of the airmen that need housing the most, Langley's housing plans calls for an increase of 106 housing units for the ranks E-1 through E-6, bringing their total to 796 - nearly two-thirds of the units available.

To account for this increase, housing

unit reductions are coming from the company grade officer and senior non-commissioned officer ranks.

The Air Force's proposal calls for the construction phase of the development to take no more than 10 years for the new housing units, but developers can submit proposals that take less time. Also, developers may re-route streets to improve the flow of the community and

re-site housing areas in order to take advantage of views of the Bethel Reservoir. As many of the forum presenters remarked, potential developers should be creative and imaginative when putting together their vision of this new community.

While Langley gets a new community and its members get new housing, the industry benefits from an income stream which is extremely resilient to ups and downs in the economy.

The terms of the proposal call for the developer to enter into a 50-year lease with the Air Force to develop and maintain the Bethel Manor Housing community in return for residents' housing allowance.

However, to ensure the community doesn't stagnate over the 50-year period, potential developers must include their plan for capital repair and replacement over the life of the lease to include housing and community upgrades and modernization.

"We see this as a win-win for Langley, the Air Force and Industry," said Bledsoe. "But for the Air Force specifically, we see this as an excellent retention tool and we definitely want to retain the finest Air Force in the world."

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