

Army center contract awarded for north Cape C

Tampa company to design, build facility; city councilman hopes locals get wor

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THE NEWS-PRESS

A Tampa firm has won a \$10.6 million contract to design and build an Army Reserve training center in north Cape Coral.

The project could boost the city's economic development and possibly provide work for local contractors but, as a government project, it won't bring in any new property taxes, said City Councilman Marty McClain.

The contract was awarded Dec. 13 to FSA + JKC Joint Venture One LLC, said Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Ken Beyer. The company did not return calls late last week seeking comment.

The center for 300 soldiers will be built near the new Veterans Affairs clinic at Corbett



Written by
Don Ruane

Road and Diplomat Parkway. The Army wants to occupy the building in July 2013,

Beyer said.

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“Traditionally qualified subcontractors should have a piece of the pie,” said McClain, who is a contractor. “Most general contractors encourage it. The general contractor probably has the costs lined up. All they have to do is fill in the slots.”

“We hire the prime. The prime goes out and hires his own subs,” Beyer said. The corps encourages contractors to hire local contractors, he said.

But even the city’s local preference ordinance can’t help a local contractor get part of the contract, McClain said.

For \$10.6 million

Here’s what the contractor will provide for the Army Reserve training center:
Main building 37,500 square feet
Maintenance building: 7,650 square feet
Parking area: 5,000 square yards for 300 soldiers
Storage area: 1,500 square feet
Occupancy: July 2013

“The city cannot dictate who they will use. The only thing the city can do is encourage them,” McClain said. “In all fairness, it comes down to a bid.”

At least 11 contractors from Lee and Collier counties, including two from Cape Coral, have shown an interest in the project.

“The architect will pick team members. The challenge is the architect is out of Tampa, so the architect may pick Tampa people,” said Jennifer Languell. Her company, Trifecta Building Solutions of Fort Myers, helps contractors meet environmental regulations such as energy efficiency and water conservation standards.

There still might be a chance to get work on the project, Languell said. Contractors move or close, so she’s interested in exploring the possibility.

“You never know,” Languell said.

But Scott Anderson of Freedom Finish Carpentry in Cape Coral thinks his chance to get work on the project has passed. Even

though his company is on a list of interested vendors, he hasn't heard from the prime contractor.

"They probably already have subcontractors and I'm not one of them," Anderson said.

Contractors like to work with subcontractors they already know and trust from their area, Anderson said.

"It would take a miracle for me at this point. We're happy for the folks in Tampa," Anderson said.

The city wants as many local providers as possible involved to help with economic development, said Dana Brunette, the city's economic development director.

The reserve center will play well off the VA clinic, Brunette said.

The \$131 million clinic is expected to open this spring and bring about 400 jobs, including those transferring from the VA's clinic in Fort Myers.

The clinic and reserve center are like anchors that will attract retailers to the area, McClain said. The city has designated the area around them as the Veterans Investment Zone. Special incentives that can be customized to a business have been created to help attract retailers, restaurants and hotels.

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