

St. Clair County offers 200 additional acres by proposed Scott AFB site for future NGA expansion

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Durbin and other members of the Illinois congressional delegation reinforce their support for proposed Scott AFB site

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE - U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, (D-IL), joined with St. Clair County Chairman Mark Kern this morning to announce that the County is prepared to offer an additional 200 acres to the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) for

future expansion, adding to a long list of advantages that the proposed Scott AFB site in St. Clair County offers for the NGA and the 3,000-plus employees who would work there. Also on hand for the announcement were representatives of several other members of the Illinois congressional delegation and Madison County Chairman Alan Dunstan who gathered with other invited guests today outside Scott Air Force Base (AFB) to express their united support for the proposed Scott AFB site for the new NGA West facility.

“St. Clair County has enhanced an already strong proposal with the additional land,” Durbin said. “Scott Air Force Base provides several advantages for the NGA and is a natural fit. Today, the Illinois Congressional Delegation reaffirms our bipartisan support for St. Clair County’s bid to be the new home of the NGA.”

Physical and cyber security for our national intelligence assets is the number one priority for their total effective operations, and county, state and federal officials in Illinois contend that the Scott AFB site in St. Clair County is clearly the most advantageous site for those requirements, not only in the region but across the entire United States.

“The NGA has a major decision to make in the next few months, but the world elements we see today are not those that were present 40 years ago nor will they be present 40 years from now. In order to allow for the most expansive capability to situate a new NGA West, we in Illinois, as a team, clearly see a need to allow for future expansion of this important national asset,” said St. Clair County Chairman Mark Kern. “To that end, for the next 10 years, and in accordance with the St. Clair County development plans, we will make available an additional 200 acres to expand the Scott AFB St. Clair County NGA West site for their mission needs.”

This latest development came about as a result of all the federal, state and local officials discussing what is best for the new NGA West facility, best for NGA and best for America, not only as they view the current threats to physical and cyber security, but based on the fact that they simply cannot imagine what the future needs might be. It’s also through that ongoing dialogue that the federal congressional delegation has become versed on the many other advantages of the proposed Scott AFB site in St. Clair County and eager to voice their support for the location.

While a scheduling conflict prevented U.S. Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) from attending the briefing, he provided a statement reaffirming his support.

"Scott Air Force Base is the only site that benefits the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and our national defense," said Kirk. "Relocating to Scott Air Force Base means immediate access to free land, space for growth and force protection, and the elimination of the vulnerable 20-mile data connection."

Leading the list of advantages is the obvious synergies with Scott AFB that come from the proposed site's proximity to the base. Scott AFB is home to the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) and United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), both of which are already clients of the NGA. This close connection to NGA's current military intelligence and business partners, and availability of existing secure state-of-the-art fiber-optic cable connections, make the site by Scott AFB uniquely positioned. Cost must also be a consideration for the NGA, as our military continues to find ways to do more with less. St. Clair County, which is the sole owner of the land, has already noted it is willing to provide the initially proposed 182-acre site at zero cost and to cover any archaeological costs that might be incurred, and today's announcement reveals that there will be a comparable amount of adjacent land available, also at no cost, for future expansion.

Other compelling factors include the site's convenient location adjacent to I-64 and a new interchange currently under construction; along with the fact that it is immediately available for construction, requires zero demolition above or below ground, and does not require cleanup of short term or long term contamination. Among the additional notable advantages of the Scott AFB site are several that will directly benefit the NGA's 3000+ employees, including full fare reimbursement for transit riders, nationally recognized quality of life and unmatched community support. The recent announcement of the formation of the midwest's first Cyber Center of Excellence, which is initially located right outside of Scott AFB, also bolsters the case for this site, as it will play a role in helping to ensure the availability of trained and certified cyber security experts to meet future workforce needs.

U.S. Congressmen John Shimkus (R-IL), Mike Bost (R-IL) and Rodney Davis (R-IL) also had representatives on hand for the briefing, and they provided a joint statement voicing their unwavering support for the proposed Scott AFB site. "We continue to believe that the St. Clair County site offers the most opportunity for NGA, its employees, and the nation. The telecommunication and utility infrastructure are basically in place and minimal disruption to the community will occur both during construction and occupation of a completed site. We offer our full support!"

"St. Clair County is proud to offer the Scott AFB site for consideration to the NGA, and we believe that the unique advantages that this site offers, including the availability of additional land for future expansion, make it the absolute best alternative for the NGA,"

said St. Clair County Chairman Mark Kern. “The county, the communities near the site, and the residents of Southwestern Illinois who have demonstrated their steadfast support for our military and their families are ready to welcome the NGA west and excited about the opportunity to do so.”

For more information, St. Clair County’s dedicated web page offers additional details related to the NGA Scott AFB site at <http://www.co.st-clair.il.us/nga>, or you can follow the twitter profile [@NGA2ScottAFB](#).