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MEETING MINUTES FOR THE
LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
HELD AT
LASALLE BUILDING
617 NORTH STREET
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
ON THE 17TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2016
COMMENCING AT 10:15 A.M.

REPORTED BY: ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR



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LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- 1 **Appearances:**
2 Willie Banks, Jr.
3 Colonel William P. "Bill" Davis
4 Robert H. Gatti, Jr.
5 William J. "Jim" Hill, III
6 Jack N. Humphries
7 Brian P. Jakes, Sr.
8 Bruce Keller OBO Stanley E. Mathes
9 Bennett C. Landreneau
10 Sherri McConnell
11 Deborah B. Randolph
12 Michael D. Reese
13 Major General Ronald G. Richard
14 Leonardo "Ben" Russo, Jr.
15 Don Pierson
16 Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Joey Strickland
17 Dylan J. Tete
18 Donald W. "Don" Vinci
19 Murray Viser
20 Mayor Lorenz J. "Lo" Walker

21 Governor John Bel Edwards
22 Dana Couvillon, LEDC
23 Chris Goode, Roosevelt Group
24 Gary Silbert, GNO, Inc.
25



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SECRETARY PIERSON:

Good morning, members and guests. We'll call the meeting to order.

At this time, we will have Ms. Dana Couvillon call the roll, please.

MS. COUVILLON:

Willie Banks.

MR. BANKS:

Here.

MS. COUVILLON:

Clarence Beebe.

(No response.)

MS. COUVILLON:

Glenn Curtis.

(No response.)

MS. COUVILLON:

Bill Davis.

(No response.)

MS. COUVILLON:

Bob Elder.

(No response.)

MS. COUVILLON:

Mr. Gatti.

MR. GATTI:

Here.



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1 MS. COUVILLON:
2 Jim Hill.
3 MR. HILL:
4 (Raises hand.)
5 MS. COUVILLON:
6 He's here.
7 Mr. Humphries.
8 MR. HUMPHRIES:
9 (Raises hand.)
10 MS. COUVILLON:
11 He's here.
12 Brian Jakes.
13 MR. JAKES:
14 Here.
15 MS. COUVILLON:
16 Ben Landreneau.
17 MR. LANDRENEAU:
18 Here.
19 MS. COUVILLON:
20 Stanley Mathes.
21 MR. KELLER:
22 Bruce Keller standing in for Stanley.
23 MS. COUVILLON:
24 Ms. McConnell.
25 MS. MCCONNELL:



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1 Here.
2 MS. COUVILLON:
3 Jim Nunn.
4 (No response.)
5 MS. COUVILLON:
6 Don Pierson.
7 SECRETARY PIERSON:
8 Present.
9 MS. COUVILLON:
10 Deborah Randolph.
11 MS. RANDOLPH:
12 Here.
13 MS. COUVILLON:
14 Michael Reese.
15 MR. REESE:
16 Here.
17 MS. COUVILLON:
18 Ron Richard.
19 MR. RICHARD:
20 Here.
21 MS. COUVILLON:
22 Ben Russo.
23 MR. RUSSO:
24 Here.
25 MS. COUVILLON:



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1 John Smith.
2 (No response.)
3 MS. COUVILLON:
4 Joey Strickland, Secretary.
5 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:
6 Here.
7 MS. COUVILLON:
8 Mr. Tete.
9 MR. TETE:
10 Here.
11 MS. COUVILLON:
12 Andy Thomson.
13 (No response.)
14 MS. COUVILLON:
15 Don Vinci.
16 MR. VINCI:
17 Here.
18 MS. COUVILLON:
19 Murray Viser.
20 MR. VISER:
21 Here.
22 MS. COUVILLON:
23 Lo Walker.
24 MR. WALKER:
25 Here.



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1 MS. COUVILLON:

2 Done.

3 SECRETARY PIERSON:

4 We have a quorum, and we welcome our
5 seven new members.

6 And at this time, we would like to have
7 you join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

8 (Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance was
9 conducted.)

10 SECRETARY PIERSON:

11 Thank you all.

12 I know many of you traveled from various
13 parts of the state to join us on this occasion this
14 morning for our Louisiana Military Advisory Council
15 meeting. We have an opportunity for the Governor to
16 address us this morning. I know his schedule is tight.
17 He can't stay for the entire meeting, but we certainly
18 welcome his presence, and at this time, I'd like to call
19 on Governor John Bel Edwards for his remarks.

20 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

21 Thank you. Thank you very much, Don,
22 and thank you all of you for serving in this capacity.
23 I wanted to personally attend to let you know that I
24 appreciate your service. Most of you have served our
25 nation. I want to tell you I appreciate that, too,



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1 especially coming the week after Veterans day. And one
2 of the things that I want us to focus on is to make sure
3 that we are showing a generous appreciation for veterans
4 across the state and for their family members, because
5 having had a wife while I was on active duty, I know
6 that family members sacrifice as well.

7 I think what you-all do is extremely
8 important because it is a matter of economic
9 development, which is why Don is here, but it's a whole
10 lot more than that. I mean, we have one of the most
11 patriotic citizenry in the country. When you look at
12 the number of people on a per capita basis who choose to
13 serve our country, it is inspiring, and we want to make
14 sure that we serve them well in return.

15 We do want to make sure that Louisiana
16 remains a place where when our military folks retire,
17 they want to come here. They want to stay here. That
18 doesn't happen if we lose our active-duty installations
19 or when they get -- if we reduce the number of soldiers
20 and airmen and so forth, then that doesn't happen the
21 way we want it to. So it's incredibly important that we
22 show the folks in the Pentagon in Washington, DC that
23 we're comitted to these installations. And despite our
24 very difficult budget constraints, we have to show that
25 we are committed to making sure that they are successful



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1 here and that they will, in turn, understand that this
2 is a place where they want to be.

3 The fact of the matter is, I don't know
4 if there's another place in the country where they can
5 train soldiers and airmen and so forth as cheaply as
6 they do in Louisiana. I don't know that there's another
7 place in the country where they are supported more than
8 they are here. Just look at the fact that out of Fort
9 Polk, the folks around that area actually agreed to have
10 thousands of acres added to that military reservation.
11 That's not happening anywhere else in the country.

12 So I'm excited about what you-all are
13 doing. I appreciate the fact that y'all are willing to
14 serve. I am going to ask that you schedule your
15 meetings at different, you know, so that we meet at Fort
16 Polk or we meet at Barksdale.

17 And by the way, I was at Barksdale
18 earlier this week, wasn't it, Don?

19 SECRETARY PIERSON:

20 Tuesday, sir.

21 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

22 Tuesday and met with General Rand, and
23 if you-all are not personally familiar with what's
24 happening at Barksdale and the investment that the Air
25 Force, the country, really, is making at Barksdale in



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1 Bossier, I think you're going to be really excited to
2 the know the role that that installation is going to
3 play in your national security, but with them making so
4 many investments they're committed to, we have to do
5 better as well. So one of the things that I've done,
6 and I got with Secretary Wilson at the Department of
7 Transportation and we are going to complete that
8 interchange off of the interstate because we have a
9 4-Star nuclear command and not a good way to get on and
10 off that post. And I shouldn't just call it a post
11 because it's a base. My Army days are showing up. But
12 that's just one of the things that we are going to do.
13 We're going to help them as best we can to make sure
14 that they're successful building a school on base to
15 serve the folks there. And then -- these are the things
16 we're going to do across the board, but I was just at
17 Barksdale and I've had similar conversations with the
18 folks at Leesville around Fort Polk, and I know that the
19 school board there is having some issues, especially
20 because the amount of money that the federal government
21 pays for the school system to offset the fact that the
22 kids, many of the kids who go there, are military
23 dependents whose family are not paying into the property
24 tax. So they get some money, but they get fixed costs
25 to serve this debt to pay teachers and everything, and

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1 when they take soldiers away, they pay less towards that
2 school system. So they're starting to struggle a little
3 bit. We have to work with them, but also show our
4 commitment to Fort Polk, and so you're going to see out
5 of me, even though we have constraints out of the
6 Capital Outlay budget constraints around our operating
7 budget, you're going to see a focus as best we can to
8 make sure we're doing what we can to support those
9 communities and there's never any reason for the folks
10 in the Pentagon to doubt our commitment to these
11 installations, to our soldiers, to our airmen, to our
12 sailors and so forth.

13 One of the ways that I want to show that
14 we want them here and that we welcome and we're going to
15 work with them is military dependents have a hard time
16 in Louisiana when they move here being able to do
17 whatever it is that they do for living, whether they're
18 beauticians or barbers or whether they are real estate
19 agents, whether they are nurses. There are a lot of
20 impediments that they have when they move here to
21 actually do what it is that they do professionally.
22 There are other states who do a better job of reducing
23 those obstacles, and one of the things I'm asking you to
24 do is take a look and find a couple of states out there
25 that do it better than we do and let's figure out how we



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1 can -- and it's probably going to involve legislation,
2 but lower those obstacles so that we can show that we
3 appreciate those dependents as well because that's
4 really what helps those families to be successful when
5 they transition to Louisiana and it's something that
6 I've heard over and over the last several years, really.
7 And it's always a turf war because we have a certain way
8 of doing things in Louisiana and we were very reluctant
9 to waive some of those requirements, but I believe when
10 it comes to military dependents, we ought to do that and
11 there ought not be another state in the nation that is
12 more welcoming, more accommodating than we are. So it
13 just kind of goes hand in hand with the patriotism that
14 we have in Louisiana and what we do for those who are
15 actually on active duty, that we also, I think, treat
16 the dependents a little bit better.

17 I want to thank Secretary Joey
18 Strickland for serving, and, you know, Joey and Don will
19 obviously be my direct eyes and ears on the commission,
20 but I do intend to be personally involved and to attend
21 meetings certainly when I can because I do think this is
22 incredibly important. And I have an opportunity to help
23 with what you-all are going to be doing because I've
24 been named on the Council of Governors. There's a few
25 governors around the country who sit on the Council of



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1 Governors who periodically will go to Washington and
2 meet with the folks in the Pentagon, meet with the
3 President and advise the President on military matters,
4 and so as you-all see things that you believe warrant
5 the President's attention or warrant a discussion in
6 Washington, please don't hesitate to bring that to my
7 attention because I will do that. I look forward to
8 being able to use my position on the Council of
9 Governors, for example, to make sure that the agenda of
10 Fort Polk Progress advances because, you know, that's
11 incredibly important. And every time we think we were
12 past the threat of having the number of soldiers there
13 reduced, it seems like they come right back at us again,
14 and that will be a horrible thing for Central Louisiana
15 to have those soldiers taken out of there, especially
16 that combat brigade, for example. I don't think JRTC is
17 going to go anywhere, but if we lost that brigade, that
18 will be significant.

19 So I want to give y'all an opportunity
20 to ask me questions or maybe tell me some things that
21 you may be concerned about, but I do want to just tell
22 you, I really appreciate your service. We are going to
23 take this council very seriously, and I want you-all to
24 play a leading role in how we deal with our veterans,
25 how we deal with the National Guard, how we deal with



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1 the active duty component. And I know I just talked
2 about Barksdale and Polk, but Belle Chasse, I mean, it's
3 all of it, and I will say this and then I'll take
4 questions, there is no doubt in my mind we have the best
5 National Guard in the country. And I have seen it
6 firsthand for a number of years, but now as Governor, I
7 have gone through the historic, unprecedented floods
8 that we had here this year where 46 out of our 60 -- I'm
9 sorry -- 56 out of our 64 parishes were declared major
10 federal disasters this year, and we saw our National
11 Guard step up time and time again, often while many of
12 their homes were actually flooded. And, you know, the
13 sad part is, I think we are as good as we are because we
14 get so much practice. I would rather have less
15 practice, but it is comforting to know that when we need
16 them, that they are going to be there and they're going
17 to do an extremely good job.

18 We are doing some great things with the
19 Department of Veterans Affairs. I mean, Joey's
20 leadership, I don't know if you know this or not, but
21 since the floods, we have distributed \$350,000 to the
22 families of people who are serving National Guard, I
23 believe --

24 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

25 Yes, sir.



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1 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

2 -- because they needed help. And that
3 was the result of the change in the law that we made
4 this year so that the Military Family Assistance Fund --
5 I may have the terminology slightly off.

6 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

7 No, that's correct, Governor.

8 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

9 It was made available for more need, and
10 we didn't know the flood was coming, but because it did,
11 that has been, you know, very, very helpful to those
12 families. But we are doing a lot of work to take care
13 of our veterans and make sure that -- and, in fact,
14 despite the \$2-billion state general fund deficit that I
15 inherited for the current fiscal year, we did not cut
16 the military department and we did not cut Veterans
17 Affairs.

18 Now, you're going to see the
19 \$313-million cut that will be outlined tomorrow at Joint
20 Legislative Committee on the budget. There's a few
21 dollars that Joey's giving me because they are excess,
22 but he offered those up. And it's not a large amount,
23 but you're going to see something from the Department of
24 Veterans Affairs. And I don't want anybody in here
25 thinking that we are taking money that he needs to



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1 perform a service that he's presently doing because we
2 would never do that, huh, Joey?

3 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

4 We're trying to do our part, even if
5 it's a few pennies.

6 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

7 That's right.

8 But, again, I just thank y'all so much
9 for your service. If I can do anything to help you-all,
10 please don't hesitate to let me know. When you schedule
11 meetings, I'm going try very hard to make sure that I
12 come and attend those meetings with you, especially if
13 you're going to do them at a place like Barksdale or
14 Fort Polk. I want to get there, and I still love to see
15 soldiers train, for example, and if we can go to Fort
16 Polk and do that, go watch a naval operation, that would
17 be great for me.

18 So with that, if you have any questions
19 or concerns or, Don, if you have something else you
20 wanted me to address.

21 SECRETARY PIERSON:

22 Governor, thank you for those remarks,
23 and you're uniquely qualified to say that we've got the
24 best Guard in the nation. Because of your background
25 experience, it's a qualified opinion. That's great to



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1 hear.

2 Thank you for including the Louisiana
3 Military Advisory Council in the executive budget and
4 the funds that we're able to be a conduit for back to
5 the military installations. They're extremely
6 important. We've had great support from the
7 legislature, but we need those small amount of dollars.
8 It's maybe \$550,000 annually that we utilize to do
9 important things at our military installations that's
10 critical to our success moving forward.

11 Also, I'd like to ask Chris Goode to
12 stand, please. I know that the Governor, when you make
13 many trips to Washington, DC, if you do have time, we
14 have the Roosevelt Group under contract, and they're our
15 eyes and ears and -- I can't say boots on the ground. I
16 say shoes on the ground because it's important work in
17 Congress and over at the Pentagon for a lot of important
18 decisions that impact our installations or may, so Chris
19 and his group guide us there and want you to know that
20 they're fully at your service as well.

21 Chris, do you want to add anything?

22 MR. GOODE:

23 Well, I'll add two things.

24 In terms of Council of Governors, that's
25 really good news. If you remember, back in Fiscal Year



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1 '13, that's when the Air Force really collapsed and the
2 National Guard took the majority of those cuts, and it
3 was Council of Governors that really worked with the Air
4 Force to roll some of those cuts back. Every state was
5 impacted by that. In Louisiana, we lost A10s at
6 Barksdale, but in that negotiation, the ATC, Air Traffic
7 Controllers, were saved at England, and then delegation
8 went along with that. But at the end of the day, the
9 Council of Governors had a really prominent role in
10 working with the Air Force to roll some of those things
11 back.

12 You mentioned Fort Polk. We have for
13 years battled saving that one brigade. Today, that is
14 the only single brigade location in the country. I know
15 you know that, but I appreciate your military
16 background, which is going to be also very helpful on
17 the Council of Governors. But we are, I think for the
18 first time, in a position to actually regroup commission
19 at Fort Polk.

20 The Army is going to select two training
21 advice brigades next year. Mike and I are going to be
22 at the Pentagon in two weeks to talk to the guy that is
23 going to do the selection. But, you know, we are in a
24 very good place, I think, going in next year, if the
25 budget follows us, to potentially regroup the commission



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1 at Fort Polk, and we will obviously keep you in the loop
2 of that.

3 Thank you.

4 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

5 Thank you.

6 And I think we have a great chance to
7 stop budgeting through the sequestration in the very
8 near future, and I'm not going to get political about
9 this, but it appears that the budget deficits don't
10 matter again, because we're -- and, look, some of that's
11 going to be very good. I think the President Elect
12 plans to build a lot of transportation infrastructure
13 around the country. I think we need to do that, but
14 we're also going to go on a different trajectory that
15 relates to the tax policy, and, in the meantime, I
16 suspect deficits are going to amount, but we're likely
17 than not to budget through sequestration and so we
18 should have some of that pressure relieved and we can do
19 some good things there.

20 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

21 Governor, the subject is state veteran
22 cemeteries. You know, earlier this year, you passed --
23 signed a bill to allow us to waive the fee for family
24 burials, and that's a good thing. We've already put
25 that into effect. As a matter of fact, we got a lot of



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1 applause -- you get a lot of kudos around the state for
2 signing that bill, but I think we have a bigger
3 situation. We need to wean the state veterans
4 cemeteries off the state general fund, just like we did
5 the homes, and make them self sufficient, but in order
6 to do that, we have to get the federal VA to raise the
7 burial plot fee for every veteran to about \$1,100 as
8 opposed to the 745. And I've been talking with other
9 state directors around the country and they're in
10 agreement with this and I'll give you a paper on it.
11 But the next time you meet with the Council of
12 Governors, if you could help us push this with other
13 governors. If we could -- the states are responsible
14 for perpetual care, but it's costing us a lot of state
15 dollars. We should be able to wean those cemeteries and
16 make them self sufficient.

17 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

18 Well, give me the paper on that. Just
19 for the reason we thought it was necessary to be able to
20 waive the fees, I'm a little bit reluctant to increase
21 the fees on people, too, but I'd like to see the
22 proposal. And we -- I know that the federal government
23 comes in and pays to build the cemeteries and we then
24 have an agreement that we're going to operate them and
25 maintain them and so forth, and so I wouldn't want to



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1 do -- I want to make sure we don't do anything that puts
2 us in a bind when it comes to meeting our obligations.

3 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

4 No, sir. The waiver that you signed,
5 Governor, even if they raised it, we can still waive it,
6 so it wouldn't --

7 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

8 Can you -- do you have to waive it in
9 total or can you decrease it? For example --

10 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

11 We can decrease it.

12 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

13 So it's really -- you can just work with
14 the family?

15 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

16 Yes, sir.

17 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

18 Okay.

19 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

20 The way that legislature passed it,
21 Governor, it's based on financial needs.

22 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

23 Got you. I'm certainly open to that.

24 And when I spoke about the National
25 Guard being the best, I only spoke about them in terms



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1 of disaster response because that's what we've seen most
2 recently, but it's a very, very good military unit as
3 well in terms of their training and their preparedness,
4 what they do when they deploy, the relationships they
5 have.

6 I think I was at Jackson Barracks a
7 couple weeks ago, Belize Defence Forces, and we have an
8 agreement now that's two decades old -- I think it's two
9 decades old that we've been working with them, but in
10 any event, we have very, very good National Guard all of
11 the way around, and I didn't want you-all to think that
12 it only comes into play when we're setting up a pod so
13 that we can distribute food and water after a disaster.

14 SECRETARY PIERSON:

15 Governor, I know we only have you for a
16 very limited amount of time. I would like to call on
17 Mike Reese to talk, among other things, about
18 public-public partnerships.

19 MR. REESE:

20 Two things real quick. First of all,
21 the entire time I've worked with LMAC and the
22 predecessor to LMAC, it's the first time we've had a
23 governor in attendance. Thank you so much.

24 We all know to be your support for our
25 military installations, and I'm very excited about what



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1 the future holds from an offensive standpoint for once.

2 But really just wanted to relay to you
3 that as you work around state, places like Central
4 Louisiana, fairly rural places like Fort Polk is very
5 rural, but it requires some resources from around the
6 state.

7 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

8 Is Simpson really rural? I mean,
9 it's...

10 MR. REESE:

11 Simpson is even more so than --

12 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

13 Come on.

14 MR. REESE:

15 I mean, just let us know as you visit
16 with different entities around the state, when you see
17 opportunities for us to better educate people, where
18 those education resources are and have recommendations
19 for us how we can better market that information so that
20 people understand what's at stake and how we can better
21 benefit our state by supporting, please share that
22 because we're very anxious to be able to do that. And
23 you have a better ear to the ground on that than we do
24 as we seek to build up consensus in our own legislature.

25 But, secondly, I want to share with you



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1 on public-public partnerships that this was being pushed
2 by Bingham and special rules and laws that allow the
3 installations to contract with the local parish or state
4 agencies to provide the same services that they
5 currently do on the installation, which is usually
6 beneficial. And so Sherri and Don had set up some
7 meetings with several of your state agencies for us a
8 couple of weeks ago, several weeks ago, maybe a month
9 now, so we're bearing the fruit of that.

10 So DOTD has already been on the table.
11 And just this week we had a meeting where Fort Polk, you
12 know, where it costs them, let's just say, \$1-million a
13 mile to overlay asphalt and the state's getting it done
14 for \$600,000 a mile, and so Fort Polk is going to be
15 able to contract with the state. And we're headed down
16 that road now to see if we can make this an agreement so
17 that Fort Polk can spend to same numbers of dollars,
18 spend it with the state and get a third more of the work
19 done on the installation. Huge win for everybody
20 involved, builds the military value of our base, helps
21 the state. There will be some dollars come to DOTD in
22 the process.

23 Secondly we have a waste management
24 situation on Fort Polk that was way too costly and it
25 wasn't run very efficiently, and now they're able to go



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1 to the local police jury. The police jury is able to go
2 to their contractor that already serves the parish,
3 expand their contract. That's going to result in huge
4 cost savings to both the installations in what they had
5 been paying and it's going to result in a lower cost for
6 the parish, for the taxpayers and the parish as well.

7 So just some great achievements, and
8 there's going to be more and more opportunities for the
9 installations to work state agencies. So as you talk
10 with those, your state agency leads, please encourage
11 them to participate in that process because I think it's
12 going to be some wins for our state agencies, our
13 installations to increase that military value.

14 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

15 And that's possible whether it's
16 Barksdale, Belle Chasse or whatever?

17 MR. REESE:

18 Correct. Absolutely. So we're really
19 working with best practices. Anything accomplished at
20 Fort Polk, we'll share with our partners at Barksdale
21 and the New Orleans Area to make sure that we're all in
22 that same synergy.

23 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

24 Got you. Well, one of the things we can
25 do for education is I know that several years ago I



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1 passed something to the legislature directing economic
2 development, and at the time, Paul Sawyer, to do an
3 economic impact study of military veterans in Louisiana,
4 and I know the study was done. And I'm not saying it's
5 time to update, but I don't remember it --

6 SECRETARY PIERSON:

7 It is.

8 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

9 It is?

10 So it may be time to update it, but when
11 we update it, let's don't just look at it and put it on
12 the shelf. Let's just make sure that everybody knows
13 how important this is to us from an economic perspective
14 so that we can build the support that we need to do the
15 things that we're all wanting to do, because the sad
16 reality is we're not going to have more money to spend
17 than we know how to spend for a long, long time, and
18 there's going to be tremendous competition for every
19 single dollar. And as we want to go and invest in these
20 areas, we are going to have to be able to show that
21 there's a return on that investment and that we're
22 making sure that everybody in the country understands
23 that we are committed to our military installations and
24 to your veterans and so forth. And it will help us, I
25 think, as we go in that direction if we update the study



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1 and then make sure that we advertise it widely,
2 especially with the folks in the legislature.

3 Anything else, Don?

4 SECRETARY PIERSON:

5 Anyone else have any thoughts, concerns
6 for the Governor?

7 Murray.

8 MR. VISER:

9 Murray Viser, Barksdale Forward, and I
10 don't have a question. I just would like to thank you
11 for being at Barksdale, I guess, what, twice in four to
12 six weeks?

13 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

14 Yeah. I'm coming back because they
15 offered me a flight in the B52, so I'm going to come
16 back and do that again. I can make it in a B52. I will
17 never get in a fighter. I just can't. I don't think
18 they'll be doing all of the maneuvers in the B52.

19 MR. VISER:

20 And thank you for your support of the
21 I-220 terminal in Barksdale, that new gate there. It's
22 desperately needed there with railroad tracks basically
23 surrounding Barksdale, and it's just a terrible
24 situation, especially for the folks that live on east
25 side of the reservation.



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1 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

2 And when we go up and meet at Barksdale,
3 because General Rand would like to host a meeting, that
4 might be one where we invite Secretary Wilson to come
5 and give an update on where we are, how long it's going
6 to take. I mean, you can't get those things done
7 overnight, but we have found the funding source, and
8 basically we got \$100-million dollars this year from the
9 FAST Act to put on I-10, but it's freeing up that same
10 amount of money that we were going to put on I-10, now
11 we can go do some things elsewhere.

12 And I told him that -- we were initially
13 awarded 60-million. We knew we needed 100 in order to
14 do what we wanted to do at Barksdale. Well, when the
15 next 40-million came in, that's what we are going to do,
16 but I'd like to maybe get Shawn to come up there and
17 talk about that and so everybody can understand how long
18 it's going to take. I know Lo Walker wants to know.
19 But we're committed to getting that done.

20 You know, we've got some other exciting
21 things because I was just at a Cyber Innovation Center.
22 The National Guard is going to put two cyber teams in
23 Louisiana. This is brand new, but a very, very
24 important development in the National Guard. We're
25 going to put one of those teams in Bossier and the other



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1 team in Baton Rouge, but we're also going to have part
2 of a headquarters element, too, and the headquarters
3 element, I think, is going to be shared with three
4 states, Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana, and they're
5 going to be working with Barksdale very closely and with
6 the folks with the Cyber Innovation Center. So, again,
7 that's an area where we have something very, very
8 positive in going on.

9 And I thank you for your leadership.
10 Mike, I thank you for yours, too. I've been working
11 with Mike for a number of years, but we really have some
12 great things going in Louisiana and we need to kind of
13 keep them going.

14 MR. VISER:

15 Thank you, sir.

16 SECRETARY PIERSON:

17 Thank you for your time today. If you
18 have to leave, obviously you're welcome to stay and hear
19 the presentations from the various elements, and our
20 pledge of Secretary Strickland and I will continue to
21 keep our installations as strong as we can and be a
22 strong force for our veterans in as many ways as we can
23 constructively, effectively serve them. We see that as
24 a very important part of our missions.

25 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:



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1 Perfect. Thank you.

2 I do have to leave because I've got a
3 meeting with some school children, I believe, today for
4 lunch who's -- they each have a parent who's been killed
5 recently, and, anyway I'm going to go and have lunch
6 with that group, but thank you for your meeting. I will
7 encourage you to schedule your meetings at different
8 places where you can see firsthand what's going on, not
9 just on the active duty side, but if -- I'm sorry -- on
10 the installation side, but maybe we can meet at one of
11 the war veterans homes one time and you can see some of
12 the things that we're doing for veterans. I know Homer
13 would love to have y'all come do that.

14 So God bless you. If there's something
15 I can do for you, please don't hesitate to let me know.
16 I can assure you that if you-all ask either Joey or Don
17 to get something to my attention, they will do that and
18 we will get right back with you. Okay?

19 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

20 Thank you.

21 GOVERNOR EDWARDS:

22 Thank y'all so much.

23 SECRETARY PIERSON:

24 We'll let the record reflect that those
25 are the opening remarks from the Chairman, and we've



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1 made our introductions.

2 I will now call for the approval of the
3 minutes from the May 2016 meeting.

4 MR. WALKER:

5 So moved.

6 SECRETARY PIERSON:

7 Moved by Lo Walker.

8 GENERAL LANDRENEAU:

9 Second.

10 SECRETARY PIERSON:

11 Second by General Landreneau.

12 All in favor, signify by saying "aye."

13 (Several members respond "aye.")

14 SECRETARY PIERSON:

15 Thank you for that.

16 Now calling on Secretary Strickland to
17 make our report relative to Veterans Affairs.

18 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

19 You want me to take the hot seat?

20 SECRETARY PIERSON:

21 Take the hot seat.

22 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

23 Good morning everybody. Good to be
24 here. Really an honor to see so many old friends and
25 folks that I've worked with over the years and to see



1 that everybody, you look relatively healthy and I hope
2 you are, but it's an honor to be here to work with
3 Secretary Pierson and his folks in Economic Development.

4 I remember years ago when General
5 Landreneau and I were working in the Foster
6 Administration, we totally revamped this board. It used
7 to be called the Governor's Military Advisory Board. I
8 think there's another name for it now, but there used to
9 be like 100 people that would come and show up and not
10 much would get accomplished. And then working with
11 Vinny and Terry Ryder and other folks, we got it down to
12 a working group of what we have in here, and that's made
13 it much more effective to support our objectives around
14 the state.

15 But what I want to do is take a few
16 moments to talk to you about Veterans Affairs. I
17 retired from active duty in 1995, and, really, like most
18 military officers, didn't know anybody in the politics,
19 but I was able to get a job with the first Governor
20 Edwards and got involved and brought the Troops to
21 Teachers program to the state. And then Governor
22 Foster, when he became governor, appointed me Secretary
23 or Director of Veterans Affairs back then, and we
24 started -- I worked very closely with General
25 Landreneau. We did a complete study of the Department



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1 of Veterans Affairs and we realized that we had a lot of
2 work to do. There one was only one veterans home in the
3 state to serve over 330,000 veterans and their families,
4 and based on that number, we were authorized to a total
5 of five. And so we started a massive program to build
6 veterans homes around the state, and we got it done in
7 Bossier, Reserve, Jennings, Monroe. And now we have
8 five veterans homes. They're all at 90 to 95 percent
9 capacity. They are -- we were able to get them off the
10 state general fund list because we knew that our state
11 was struggling with the budget, and now they're all self
12 sufficient.

13 As a matter of fact, we're not only able
14 to meet our commitment to our veterans, but we usually
15 have a huge surplus at the end of the year, which we are
16 able to help our state with their budget. I gave back
17 \$5-million to the state to help the Governor plug the
18 budget hole and was really proud to do that. And it
19 didn't hurt us a bit. We still have plenty of money.

20 We receive money from the federal
21 government through several streams, and some of them
22 you're familiar with, Medicare, Medicaid, 70 percent
23 service veterans or 70 percent service connected, per
24 diem payments, and then there is some private pay
25 involved. So there's like five money streams coming in



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1 to run those homes, and we're not having any problems at
2 all.

3 We undergo yearly healthcare surveys by
4 the federal VA, and also CMS surveys, again, by the
5 federal VA. These are quality of care inspections that
6 are very, very intense, kind of like even more intense
7 then the old IG inspections that we all went through in
8 the military. I mean, they come in and they look at
9 everything, and so it's very intense. I've got two
10 homes undergoing those inspections even as we speak this
11 morning, Monroe and Reserve.

12 So we're very proud of our homes, and we
13 provide -- we don't even call them nursing homes. We
14 call them community-assisted living centers, and my
15 motto, which I've expressed to my people -- and, by the
16 way, we have over 900 employees in the Department of
17 Veterans Affairs, and our budget is a \$60-million
18 budget, so we are not a small agency. We're not the
19 largest agency, but we're not a small agency, and we
20 contribute a lot to the economy of the state.

21 But one of the things that I tell my
22 people to express to our families out there is that our
23 veterans homes are places where veterans go to live, not
24 to die. I mean, we provide the best quality of care
25 probably of any private nursing home in the State of



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1 Louisiana.

2 I don't have a problem filling my homes.
3 I have waiting lists of people trying to get in, and
4 that's a good thing for us because that shows that we
5 have something tangible that can support our families in
6 their elderly years, but there's one other thing I
7 wanted to mention about the homes. The homes are not
8 just for elderly veterans and spouses. Spouses can live
9 in a veterans home as well, but they're also for
10 combat-wounded veterans, and we have a number of
11 veterans from Dessert Storm, from Iraq and Afghanistan
12 who reside in our veterans homes. And we have doctors
13 that come in every day. We have pharmacists. We have
14 rehabilitation for veterans that have had strokes. And
15 I've got to tell you, I was at Jackson all day
16 yesterday, we awarded over 137 honor medals, which I'm
17 going to talk about in a little bit, but I ran into
18 several veterans from Dylan's area, from Iraq and
19 Afghanistan, who had strokes because of their combat
20 services and they're wheelchair bound and we take really
21 good care of those veterans, so we are very fortunate in
22 our state to have those.

23 And we're tied in directly with the
24 National Home Health Administration, and the guy -- I'm
25 very fortunate in that my chief of staff, you know,



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1 every successful commander would not be successful if it
2 wasn't for a good chief of staff, and I have the best.
3 He's right back there, Homer Rogers. Forty years in
4 veterans healthcare and he knows -- he tells the federal
5 VA what to do and then that's the way it should be.

6 And, also, I want to introduce my
7 Communications Director, former Air Force Captain, and
8 she keeps the word out there and keeps the bad guys off
9 us whenever they blasting us sometimes. That does
10 happen no matter how hard you try. So that's our homes.

11 The other big program that we have is
12 our parish benefits programs. We have highly trained
13 benefits counselors in every parish of the state, and
14 these people, for the most part, men and woman, are
15 veterans. They work very hard to process claims in
16 pension disability compensation benefits for our
17 veterans. They go through an intensive training to be
18 qualified to do that, and then they come back twice a
19 year for refresher training. Their job is to make sure
20 that the claims coming out of the parishes are so well
21 put together that when they get into the federal
22 pipeline, there's no reason for the feds to turn them
23 back because we want them to be adjudicated as quickly
24 as possible so those veterans can get their disability
25 compensation. We have also a group of paralegals in New



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1 Orleans that verifies those claims and takes one last
2 look before they go to the federal side.

3 The biggest complaint that we get when
4 it comes to claims is in the appeals process. I tell
5 veterans don't appeal your claim, and the reason why I
6 tell them that is because there's a three to four-year
7 backlog from the Board of Appeals in Washington. And
8 the state directors have been blasting the federal VA
9 about that for many years, but it has not improved. So
10 what I tell veterans to do, if your claim comes back and
11 it's not what you think it should be, don't appeal it.
12 Just reopen the claim because if you reopen the claim,
13 it only takes six months for the claim to be heard again
14 as opposed to you sitting around three or four years
15 waiting on your claim. And so I think the message is
16 finally, finally getting out. I'm like John the
17 Baptist; I'm like out there preaching in the wilderness
18 every day to insure that our veterans understand that.

19 And so we're very proud of our benefits
20 program. It was the very first program brought to
21 Louisiana right after World War I. Last year, we
22 brought in \$1.2-billion in federal compensation into the
23 State of Louisiana. That's money that goes around two
24 or three times before it goes back out, and so that's a
25 tremendous program. And, you know, the sad thing is,



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1 our counselors start out at only \$24,000, almost \$25,000
2 a year, but we're working -- we have a plan on February
3 the 1st to bring their pay, without civil service
4 involvement, up to a competitive level, and I'm looking
5 forward to that. So that's the benefits division.

6 The other big program that we have, and
7 I know we're limited on time, but the other big program
8 that we have is our state veterans cemeteries. A few
9 years ago, the federal government got away from building
10 these huge national cemeteries. Actually, in 1991, the
11 State of Louisiana ran out of burial space for our
12 veterans. It was a major embarrassment for our state.
13 We were able to -- by the time I came on board, we were
14 able to acquire four acres at Port Hudson to fit that
15 gap, and then we were able to, working with the feds,
16 get another 125 acres in Zachary to add to the national
17 cemetery. But they're just not going to build anymore
18 of these huge cemeteries. So the answer is state
19 veteran cemeteries. What happens is that the federal
20 government -- the state puts up the land, the federal
21 government comes in and builds it, builds the
22 administration buildings, sets the headstones. They do
23 everything. And then they give the state the keys and
24 say, "Okay, State, run it." We're responsible for
25 perpetual care.



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1 The federal government provides -- and
2 this is what I was talking to the Governor about. The
3 federal government provides \$745 per burial for every
4 veteran. The veteran is buried free of charge and gets
5 a marker and all of the honors, and the state gets \$745.
6 We're also authorized to charge \$745 per loved one, per
7 spouse or child, because they can be buried with their
8 veterans. We're a poor state, and I kept running into
9 families that couldn't afford that \$745, so I asked the
10 legislature to allow me to negotiate a lower fee or to
11 even waive it, depending on the financial situation of
12 the family. The legislature approved it; the Governor
13 signed it and it's law.

14 But what I want is for the federal VA to
15 give us 1,100 to \$1,200 burial plot fee per veteran
16 because then that would allow us to make the state
17 cemetery self sufficient and we wouldn't have to go to
18 legislature for \$1-million every year. And that's
19 doable, and so I'm going to work with the Governor and
20 Don on getting that done.

21 The other program that we have, which is
22 very, very good, is the Military Family Assistance Fund
23 that the Governor had mentioned. That fund was
24 originally set up when Vinny was retained to help deploy
25 units of the Guard to help those young men and woman



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1 come home one last time after their training before they
2 deploy into combat theaters. It's still like that.
3 That fund was set up primarily to support Guard and
4 Reserves. But we were sitting with \$1-million in that
5 fund and I was afraid that the legislature would take
6 that money, and so I asked the legislature if they would
7 extend that fund to allow me to support all veterans and
8 keep money in there for our Guard and Reserve. They
9 agreed to do that not knowing that we were going to be
10 flooded, and so we're actually approaching a little over
11 \$350,000. I think that's -- that's where we're at,
12 Alex? And we supported about 1,000 veterans that went
13 under, and that's money that they don't have to pay
14 back. That's a good thing. And we took that idea from
15 the State of Arizona, which has a similar fund, and
16 we're going to replenish that fund through state tax
17 write offs and also the sale of specialty tags, and so
18 it's an excellent, excellent program.

19 For veterans that were not affected by
20 the flood that just have original expense issues, then
21 we have a board that oversees the fund that can approve
22 any amount from 13,000 to \$500, and so it's a good
23 program and we're only one of two states in the nation
24 with a program like that for our veterans.

25 And so what the Governor was saying that



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1 he wants Louisiana to be a veteran-friendly state, I
2 believe that we are. I think we are probably the most
3 veteran-friendly state in the nation, and we are going
4 to continue along that trend.

5 Other programs that we have, the Honor
6 Medal. I mentioned it a few minutes ago with 330,000
7 veterans. We're authorized to award a medal, a
8 beautiful honor medal, to every veteran. We've only
9 given out, since Governor Foster was in office when the
10 program first came around, was 40 -- we've given a total
11 of 40,000. Well, I'm going to work really, really hard
12 to increase that. When I leave here at three years or
13 however many years I'm here, I want over 150,000
14 veterans to have received medals, so I'm going to be
15 pushing that program really hard. It's simple. All
16 you've got to do is send in a copy of your DD214. We'll
17 mail the medal to you. If you want a ceremony, we'll
18 give you a ceremony. It's not hard at all. You just
19 need to tell us you. We just want to know. We want to
20 give you a medal. And they're beautiful. They're
21 heirlooms that can be handed down to your children.

22 We have other programs. We have
23 outreach programs to homeless veterans. We have
24 outreach programs to woman veterans. As a matter of
25 fact, Alex, my Communications Director, is an expert



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1 licensed military sexual trauma counselor. She works
2 with woman veterans who have experienced that. We have
3 30,000 woman veterans in Louisiana, and we're trying
4 really hard to reach out to them. It's very difficult
5 because woman veterans don't tend to come out.
6 Sometimes they don't even know they're veterans, and so
7 Alex and I are working really hard to identify them and
8 to help them.

9 We're working with organizations like
10 Dylan's for homeless veterans.

11 Stand up, Dylan.

12 Dylan is an Iraq veteran, I think
13 Marine.

14 MR. TETE:

15 Army.

16 MR. STRICKLAND:

17 Army. I'm going to really salute you
18 now.

19 But Dylan was, through his own efforts,
20 having -- can I tell them a little bit about you?

21 MR. TETE:

22 Sure.

23 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

24 Dylan went through -- Dylan saw a lot of
25 hard combat in Iraq, which resulted in severe



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1 post-traumatic stress. At one time, he even
2 contemplated suicide. And then he found a reason to
3 stay put, stay alive, to stay with us, and that was to
4 build housing for veterans. He's been able almost
5 single handed to raise \$16-million to build a veterans
6 housing community in New Orleans called Bastion. And I
7 was there at the groundbreaking, and these homes, one,
8 two and three bedrooms, will provide housing for young
9 veterans.

10 MR. TETE:

11 Thank you.

12 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

13 That's the kind of commitment, and we're
14 working with Dylan. We just opened, working with
15 Volunteers of America -- and, by the way, Volunteers of
16 America are our partners when it comes to providing
17 housing, transient housing and permanent housing, for
18 our veterans and for our homeless veterans. And we just
19 opened up a 16 unit over on the North Shore. They
20 started working on it, and those housing -- in
21 Covington, actually -- will be for veterans.

22 So a lot of good things happening in the
23 world of Veterans Affairs. This is my -- I've been a
24 director or deputy for 17 years, so I've pretty much
25 seen it all and experienced it all. There are a lot of



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1 things I'm concerned with. I'm concerned about the
2 Choice card situation for veterans. They don't totally
3 understand it, so I'm working with the three VA medical
4 center directors to ensure that when your veterans use
5 the Choice card, even when they make a mistake, to
6 forgive their veterans because most veterans don't
7 understand that you have to get prior permission to use
8 the card before you use it. So when you're sick and you
9 really need a doctor and you can't get into the VA
10 medical center, that card authorizes you to see a
11 civilian doctor of your choice. So we're going to
12 continue to work hard and do everything we can to
13 support our veterans.

14 I have three sons. All three of my sons
15 are combat veterans, so...

16 My father-in-law just died of Agent
17 Orange. He was a retired Army Vietnam veteran, so it's
18 a personal commitment with me as well as a professional
19 one, and I look forward to working with Don and all of
20 you and I'm just glad to be here. Thank you.

21 SECRETARY PIERSON:

22 Thank you, Secretary Strickland. Thank
23 you for your service and leadership for this important
24 endeavor.

25 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:



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1 Thank you, Don. Appreciate it.

2 SECRETARY PIERSON:

3 Now, we'll move on the agenda to
4 Barksdale Air Force Base, Murray Viser, we'll call on
5 you to talk to us.

6 MR. VISER:

7 Thank you, Secretary. It's a privilege
8 to be with this group today and give you a little bit of
9 an update on Barksdale Air Force Base and some great
10 things that are going on up there.

11 Nobody wants to hear me sing. I promise
12 you. The only time I sing is when the choir is really
13 loud in church.

14 A lot of things are going on at
15 Barksdale. We are very blessed. You know, I'll cover
16 some of this, but I won't go through the whole thing.
17 But we are very blessed to have a 4-Star commander at
18 Barksdale, and that has made a huge difference in the 18
19 months or so that he's been there. General Rand has
20 forced the command, has forced the men and woman at
21 Barksdale to take it to a whole different level, and
22 it's really impressive to see him operate in how he
23 does. I don't think the man sleeps. I know he's never
24 home, so he is out there doing work for America and
25 doing work for our men and women that are in the Air



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1 Force.

2 And on the note of Global Strike
3 Command, it's continuing to grow, and that is a great
4 thing. They taken on Nuclear Command and Control
5 Mission, and it's expected to bring another two or 300
6 jobs into in the command. We understand this morning
7 that House looks like they are very close to passing the
8 National Defense Authorization Act, which would be a
9 very good thing. That will be a good thing and going to
10 provide around, I think it's, \$90-billion of overseas
11 contingency fund to provide for more jobs and more
12 money.

13 We continue to advocate for
14 recapitalization to the weapons storage facility at
15 Barksdale Air Force Base. That facility was deactivated
16 probably seven or eight years ago. As it stands now,
17 looks to be programmed in 2019 with the MILCON project.
18 It will be a three-year program that will last till
19 2022, \$350-million total for that program, and that's
20 something that is definitely needed for Barksdale
21 because right now, to load up nuclear-capable weapons,
22 our B52s have to fly to Minot, North Dakota and use
23 their weapons storage facility out there.

24 We also are excited about a new delivery
25 system for Barksdale and other bases in the Air Force,



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1 particularly the B21 Raider. The contract was left for
2 that this past summer. And the long-range standoff
3 missile. That missile is a follow-on to the current
4 cruise missile that we have. A lot of discussion has
5 been going around about, "Why do you need a new cruise
6 missile if you've got a new stealth bomber?" Well, the
7 fact of the matter is, the stealth characteristics will
8 not continue four years on out into the 2060-2070
9 timeframe that they're talking about for the B21, so
10 it's important to have a conventional, long-range cruise
11 missile, not just for the B52s, which are anything but
12 stealthy, but also B52s and the B21s. We continue to
13 work with the new fixed-wing mission to support Green
14 Flag East at Fort Polk, the MQ9 mission that Chris and
15 the rest of us were working on, hopefully trying to
16 track the Barksdale with someplace else. So we have not
17 forgotten about our commitment to Fort Polk to have
18 jointness within the State of Louisiana.

19 We also want to establish Northwest
20 Louisiana as the focal point for development of
21 technical and other foundational capabilities that will
22 support Air Force Global Strike Command. That's
23 building directly on what's going on with the Cyber
24 Innovation Center and the new facility that just opened
25 Tuesday morning for CSRA. We continue to work with



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1 higher education around Northwest Louisiana to supply
2 the jobs and the folks necessary to make that facility
3 or those facilities a success, again, to support the
4 Nuclear Command and Control Mission that Global Strike
5 Command has taken on. Secure Air Force to take it back
6 to a 3-Star command. Each Air Force commander reports
7 to the commander of US Strategic Command. He's a Joint
8 Forces Air Component Commander. In other words, he
9 supplies the combat capability for US Strategic Command
10 and other combat commanders in theater. It is a big
11 job. It's a huge job, and to be an effective advocate,
12 that command needs to go back to a 3-Star command as it
13 was.

14 We'd like to see some expanded bandwidth
15 coming into Barksdale for the Point of Presence Center
16 close to the CIC at Barksdale. All of the
17 communications for Air Force Global Strike Command,
18 General Rand, from US Strategic Command for the Second
19 Bombing, the 8th Air Force, which controls the
20 nuclear -- all of the bombs down there, of course, comes
21 through Barksdale Air Force Base command post. We
22 desperately need to have better bandwidth coming in
23 there. We desperately need to have another com line
24 coming in. So right now, there's only one piece of lith
25 fiber that's coming into to Barksdale, and we need that



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1 redundancy so there's a backup for it.

2 Along with Chris Goode and the Roosevelt
3 Group -- I'm sorry. I tell my wife all of the time I'm
4 a technological dinosaur and I need a lot of help. I
5 guess I'm glad I'm not extinct.

6 We continue to develop an advocacy
7 strategy to ensure that the Louisiana Congressional
8 Delegation understands the need of Barksdale Air Force
9 Base and they communicate their interest to corporate
10 Air Force and help them understand that their decisions
11 made across the Air Force, not just for Barksdale, is
12 important. Again, a big part of it, piece to that
13 puzzle is the 4-Star general at Air Force Global Strike
14 Command. We've got basically a new congressional
15 delegation that's coming in, especially after this
16 election. It's important that they understand what goes
17 on at Barksdale, they understand the importance of
18 Barksdale Air Force Base, not just for the country, but
19 to Northwest Louisiana and the state as a whole.

20 We, again, talk a lot about the weapons
21 storage facility out at Barksdale. As I said, our B52s
22 are dependent on Minot Air Force Base for support. And,
23 again, it's not an inexpensive project. It is a huge,
24 huge project.

25 Just recently the Air Force has raised a



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1 flag that they may look at doing inhouse BRACs, and,
2 folks, I'll tell you, that scares me to death. I would
3 rather know who's creeping me than wake up one morning
4 and find out we've got a real problem on our hands. So
5 we want to make sure that the congressional delegation
6 understands that, that there is some congressional
7 oversight to that process because there are laws in
8 place about how many folks you can move out of the
9 military installation.

10 I understand what the Air Force is faced
11 with. They have 30 percent excess capacity within their
12 bases, but that doesn't mean that they're 30 percent
13 base -- 30 percent of bases could be closed, but it
14 means there's unused land and unused facilities on
15 various bases, and they're looking for some relief on
16 how to get out from under some of that overhead.

17 So Barksdale is the largest single
18 employer in Shreveport, Bossier, Northwest Louisiana
19 area. It has a total economic impact of almost
20 \$754-million, 17,000 active-duty civilians, reserve and
21 dependents live in Northwest Louisiana that this
22 Barksdale Air Force Base is in. Approximately 40,000
23 folks, retirees and their families, like Mayor Walker,
24 live in Louisiana because Barksdale is there. If
25 Barksdale were not there, they would go find another



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1 military base where they could receive the support that
2 military bases provides for their retirement.

3 I talked about another BRAC. You know,
4 there are -- there's a lot of room for mistakes and
5 miscalculations in a BRAC. A lot of bad information
6 gets thrown around, and it takes a long, long, long time
7 to implement a BRAC. We're still working on stuff from
8 2005 trying to integrate that back in. So it's
9 important that we work, we, Barksdale Forward, work to
10 sustain Barksdale Air Force Base in its mission. It's
11 important to me that we work with Fort Polk in the
12 partnership that we have with Fort Polk to make sure
13 that, again, military understands that there is a state
14 of jointness within the State of Louisiana.

15 I mentioned recapitalization Green Flag
16 Mission, growing a fixed-wing, painting a fixed-wing
17 mission to support the Joint Readiness Training Command
18 at Fort Polk. That's important. It's important for the
19 sake of Fort Polk; it's important for the sake of
20 Barksdale and it's important for the good of the public.

21 Public-private partnerships, our Wing
22 Commander, new Wing Commander, Colonel Neuman, came from
23 Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota. He's very
24 familiar with public-private partnerships, very
25 interested in pursuing that. So there is a lot of



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1 opportunities between the community and Barksdale and
2 the military. We are very fortunate to have, as I
3 mentioned earlier, the support of the Governor for, I
4 call it, the 220 terminus into Barksdale, to join up
5 with the military construction dollars to build a new
6 gate and a new entrance into Barksdale.

7 As I mentioned, Barksdale is surrounded
8 on two sides by railroad tracks, and it can cause a lot
9 of problems trying to get the kids off base for school,
10 back on base for school, trying to get folks coming in
11 and out of the base just to come to work.

12 So those are important things that we're
13 working on. Schools, we're working with Barksdale.
14 They have granted approval from the Bossier Parish
15 School Board to have a charter school on base, so we're
16 working with them, and I believe in the next two or
17 three weeks, the corporate partner with them will be in
18 to Barksdale to look at three sites for that potential
19 school.

20 So regular outreach for Capitol Hill
21 depending and to the Pentagon, very important. Chris
22 and his team are very helpful to us in that outreach. I
23 am fortunate to be a member of Air Force Civic Leader
24 Group. That's about, oh, if you count all of the
25 emeritus folks, that's probably about 45 to 50 people,



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1 but we have direct interaction with Secretary of the Air
2 Force and the Chief of Staff in the Air Force and Air
3 Force senior leadership.

4 Association of Defence Communities is a
5 wonderful asset that we participate in. We help
6 maintain congressional advocacy for support of B52
7 upgrades.

8 L-T, which is a family of Beyond Line of
9 Sight Communications, is basically a satellite uplink
10 for the B52. For most of you that don't know, the B52
11 is the last plane that came online in 1962, so it's
12 entering not into its golden years, believe it or not,
13 because it's scheduled to continue as a viable platform
14 into the 2040 timeframe and beyond. So it's important
15 that we have these upgrades.

16 CONECT, which is the digital backbone
17 for the aircraft, will allow, through a database inside
18 the bomb bay, will allow the carrier to be used for
19 smart weapons, not just on the pylons of the B52, but
20 internal to the aircraft, which improves range, carrying
21 capability, obviously, and loiter time.

22 Strategic radar replacement, in a
23 nuclear mission, it's extremely important know where
24 you're going to put your bomb, so a capable radar is
25 very, very important. The radar that's on the aircraft



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1 today was built in 1980. Well, I'm not going to do the
2 math in public, but that was a long time ago.

3 The new engines, these are the original
4 engines on the aircraft. General Wilson, who's the Vice
5 Chief of Staff of the Air Force, former commander of the
6 8th Air Force and Air Force Strike Command, has
7 requested briefing from the staff tomorrow to find out
8 where they are with the project. So that, again, that's
9 very important.

10 MILCON projects, the two on the list,
11 new communications squadron complex, that's going to
12 take eight buildings on the base and combine them into
13 one facility. The current place where the servers are
14 stored -- I don't make this up; I just report them -- is
15 a 1952s dining hall, eight-foot ceilings, and the
16 servers are scattered around like you wouldn't believe,
17 so desperate that we have that new facility.

18 We're preparing for future missions.
19 We've got to protect our flying environment at
20 Barksdale. We have a great history with the Joint
21 Bandwidth Survey. I think the first one goes back to
22 1995. The most recent one was completed in '09, and
23 it's being upgraded as we speak. It's extremely
24 important that we identify as a community the
25 encroachment areas around Barksdale and deal with that.



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1 Barksdale has a great partnership with the Bossier
2 Metropolitan Planning Commission, and Sam Marsiglia and
3 his staff are great about helping builders and
4 developers understand the importance of maintaining
5 clear air space for Barksdale.

6 And it's important to look at it from
7 not just a B52 perspective. Yes, they're old; yes,
8 they're loud; yes, they're smoky. All of these things,
9 but new aircraft coming up in the future, the B21
10 Raider, potential F35 Mission, with reserves, to work
11 with Fort Polk. Those airplanes are loud. They're very
12 loud, and so we need to understand and help the
13 community understand that these new aircraft are the
14 future of Barksdale Air Force Base. So we feel like
15 we're prepared for the future. We're working towards
16 the future, and we're not just stagnantly accepting what
17 we've got, but it's important to understand the
18 challenges.

19 Less than half the Air Force forces are
20 combat-coded. They are ready -- the combat-coded forces
21 are ready for high-end threat. I read an article this
22 morning driving in from New Orleans -- well, my wife was
23 driving. I was not -- about the F15Cs. Those
24 aircraft -- I believe we have some at Belle Chasse.
25 Those aircraft were built in the 70s -- the 80s, on 70s



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1 technology. Their Air Force is going to have to decide
2 if they're going to upgrade those aircraft or if they're
3 going to replace them.

4 Our technology gap that we have right
5 now that we enjoy over our peers and your peers,
6 potentially enemies, is narrow. It's extremely
7 important that that technology gap stay where it is or
8 grow because, otherwise, we're going to be bypassed and
9 the tradition of air superiority that we've enjoyed
10 every since Vietnam, really, could go away. We could
11 have real problems and the future.

12 Our Air Force is the smallest, oldest
13 and least ready than it's ever been, and a lot of that
14 goes back to a lot of programs that need to be worked
15 on. Upgrade nuclear arsenal; new bomber, F35; long-range,
16 stand-off missile, all of these things cost a lot of
17 money. A lot of money. And it's going to be real
18 sporty coming in the early 20s to see how all of these
19 programs are going to be balanced.

20 As a result of the Force Drawdown,
21 Secretary of Defense has asked the Air Force to come up
22 with five 4-Stars to retire, to drop down to a 3-Star
23 position. A couple of them have already happened.

24 You know, BRAC, again, is a big concern
25 of ours, and the Air Force has the resources to do what



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1 they have to do to fly, fight and win, not only in this
2 environment, but in the environment coming up that we
3 see in the future so that our young soldiers, sailors
4 and airmen and marines don't have to be out without air
5 superiority. They don't have to worry about that part
6 of their fight.

7 So that's my presentation. I thank
8 y'all for listening. If y'all have questions, I'll try
9 to answer them.

10 (No response.)

11 MR. VISER:

12 Thank you very much.

13 SECRETARY PIERSON:

14 Thank you, Murray.

15 Mike Reese, Fort Polk Progress.

16 MR. REESE:

17 Secretary Pierson, thanks for your
18 leadership at the LMAC and our advocacy and our
19 dependence and, I think, the significance of LMAC. And,
20 Secretary Pierson, thank you for chairing.

21 SECRETARY PIERSON:

22 You're welcome.

23 MR. REESE:

24 For not having military background and
25 experience, he's done a great job of jumping in head



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1 first and really helping us.

2 SECRETARY PIERSON:

3 I'm going to send her to computer
4 school.

5 MR. REESE:

6 I'm going to move on in appreciation of
7 time and just give everybody a quick update of where
8 we're at with Fort Polk and Fort Polk Progress.

9 As most of you know, we survived a
10 couple of significant rounds of Army corps structure
11 reductions, and we did that through really just the
12 sheer support of our community, our congressional
13 delegation, making sure that the military made sound
14 decisions based on accurate information and really our
15 statewide community coming out by the tens of thousands
16 to support that installation and really change the way
17 the Army viewed Fort Polk as an installation going
18 forward. However, during that period of time, the Army
19 did make some major reductions from a high of nearly
20 570,000 to a low of around 450,000, potentially going
21 down to 420,000 and possibly lower. This leaves Fort
22 Polk as the only installation in the Army inventory with
23 a single orphan brigade combat team, which makes up the
24 bulk of our soldiers that are stationed in Fort Polk,
25 that makes up the bulk of our economic impact to our



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1 state and it gives the community the economic impact
2 that's necessary to provide the type of service that our
3 military families should expect.

4 So for the first time in five years,
5 we're actually in a position to grow and go on the
6 offense, and that's something I've been very, very
7 excited about because it seems like we've just been
8 fighting one battle after another for the past five or
9 six years just trying to avoid being cut and giving no
10 attention whatsoever to leveraging our resources, to
11 growing.

12 So there's two training advice brigades
13 that the Chief of Staff of the Army wants to grow. We
14 know Fort Polk is one of the installations being
15 considered because it would represent the only growth
16 that's happened recently with the Army. There's a lot
17 of competition for this mission, but because of all of
18 the things that make the Joint Readiness Training Center
19 great, all of those things kind of build, set the mold
20 for what the Chief of Staff would like to see the
21 training advised.

22 We obviously have a lot of excess
23 capacity at Fort Polk as we have lost some other corps
24 structure over the last two or three years, and as
25 Murray mentioned as well, we're very mindful of the



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1 potential for a base realignment closure round, which we
2 continue to view as a big opportunity for Fort Polk.

3 So the metrics for our past success, so
4 obviously it's or local community strength, you know,
5 and I see Debbie here for the Alexandria community and
6 Ben Russo from CLECO and Colonel Willie Banks, who was
7 working as city administrator at the time, we just
8 pooled all of these people together and really made it
9 impossible for the Army to make those kind of reductions
10 during that period of time based on that support. We've
11 been well positioned with our congressional delegation,
12 as Murray mentioned. Here we are at a period of time
13 where we have a great opportunity on the horizon for our
14 military installations like Fort Polk and Barksdale, and
15 Fort Polk especially with our additional training space,
16 but we have many new members of Congress, and these new
17 members of Congress will have new staff and some of
18 these decisions will get made in a potentially
19 plussed--up financial situation very quickly. And so
20 it's really incumbent upon us to work with those new
21 members and staff committees that they chose to serve on
22 and the staff they chose to hire so we can quickly hit
23 the ground running.

24 You know, again, the smart groundwork,
25 the land purchase program is really giving us more



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1 leverage. You know, we're working with those Fort Polk
2 leaders that are coming to Louisiana; they're feeling
3 that experience and the support they get from Louisiana.
4 We're engaging them heavily in their command at Fort
5 Polk, and now you have people that are -- the Deputy
6 Commander at 25th in Hawaii; you have the SOUTHCOM
7 commander; you have the European -- Deputy Commander of
8 European Forces Command have all recently left Fort Polk
9 and are great advocates for this installation, and so
10 we're leveraging that even as they leave.

11 And then, finally, in talking about the
12 Land Purchase Program, there is some talk that that
13 could expand.

14 This Education Initiative, again, one of
15 things we use some of the state resources for is to help
16 leverage grants, and we've been very successful for in
17 the last year. This Education Initiative is growing by
18 leaps and bounds to success in our schools for our
19 military-connected students. The school report cards, I
20 believe, came out today for the state, and I know that
21 we grew in almost every school that had
22 military-connected students. We had major improvement.
23 So this is something that the Army has huge buy in to.
24 Our military families are very appreciative of it and
25 will change that longstanding perception of, "Hey, I've



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1 been assigned to Fort Polk. What does this mean for my
2 family in terms of education?" and any negative
3 perception they may have. So that's very, very
4 important.

5 Some of the reasons that we can't rest
6 presently, very similar to what Murray described. You
7 know, the budget sequester process is not dead yet.
8 Hopefully it will be and start budgeting based on
9 military strategy, which will dictate a higher number of
10 active-duty soldiers and where those missions will go we
11 want to make sure that we're working on. You know, the
12 new missions will be very competitive.

13 We continue in our military value
14 scoring. Out of all of the installations in the
15 country, we continue to be around the middle of the
16 pact, the middle third of the pact. Some of that
17 continues to be because they're not scoring Fort Polk
18 based on new and freshest data because of our
19 recently-expanded 47,000 acres of training space. So we
20 ought to continue to advocate for that.

21 We fight very hard to continue to keep
22 our hospital open as Army MEDCOM has challenging
23 budgets. We are continuing to work on MILCON for a new
24 Joint Operations Command Center in North Fort Polk that
25 we believe will be in the 2019 to 2020 range.



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1 BRAC continues to be on the horizon
2 because of the excess capacity within the Army. Again,
3 we believe because of our mission, because of our cost
4 of operations, we have huge opportunity for gain there.
5 And, again, our economic impact is significant for our
6 state and certainly for our region.

7 Again, really paying attention to what
8 the future Army looks like. This is one of the things
9 that through some of the state resources and utilizing
10 people like Chris, we can really start with not just
11 focusing on what's going on today, but really looking
12 what is the Army 2025 strategy, what does an
13 installation look like, what are the missions, how are
14 the corps structure going to be constructed, so we make
15 sure that we're in alignment with those needs. And so
16 we'll continue to watch and be prepared for BRAC. I
17 think, y'all, it's not something I'm nervous about
18 anymore. Because of our professional advocacy through
19 the Roosevelt Group, because of the work we're doing in
20 the community, I think we'll be well ahead and prepared
21 to engage at that level.

22 And then, finally, just our next steps,
23 you know, our FY18 Congressional Outreach Plan, there's
24 a lot of things going on. Your new members of Congress
25 and the senator could be the chair of the Appropriations



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1 Subcommittee on Military Constructions and Veterans
2 Affairs. That's a huge deal, you know, and it could be
3 major leverage with the State of Louisiana in our
4 delegation. We have new members that will be asking to
5 serve on the House Armed Services Committee and the
6 Senate Armed Services Committee. So there's a lot of
7 work we've got to do very quickly. For us, the Training
8 Advise Brigade at Joint Operations Command, we have one
9 of the oldest chapels in the Army. It's a quality of
10 life issue. We're continuing to advocate for that. And
11 then our UAS runways, just difficulties as the airspace,
12 protected airspace that's required, and our runway is
13 too short at Fort Polk.

14 The public-public partnerships I
15 mentioned when the Governor was here, so I won't go into
16 that in greater detail, but we are going to have some
17 huge wins from that in the very near future, and it's
18 going to make Fort Polk look even more attractive to the
19 Army as they make choices where to station soldiers.
20 We'll be more integrated with the state, more integrated
21 with the local community. It's going to save the Army
22 money, save the community money as well. Great
23 opportunities there. And then continuing, you know,
24 just to pay attention that all of the decisions are not
25 made at Fort Polk and they're not all made in the



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1 Pentagon and making sure that we're working closely with
2 IMCOM in San Antonio.

3 And then I'm currently chairing the
4 Association of Defense Communities on Federal Advocacy.
5 So we have a meeting on the 1st of December where we're
6 finishing up our documents that will be presented to the
7 incoming President's transition team about the issues
8 important to defense communities, so...

9 That's our presentation on Fort Polk.
10 I'm happy to answer any questions.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. REESE:

13 Thank you.

14 SECRETARY PIERSON:

15 Thank you, Mike, for that report, and
16 thank you for your leadership.

17 Southeast Military Alliance, Gary
18 Silbert.

19 MR. SILBERT:

20 So good morning, Secretary Strickland,
21 Secretary Pierson, commission members. It's a privilege
22 to be here with you today and provide you an update on
23 the Southeast Louisiana Military Alliance. I work for
24 GNO, Inc. But support this outreach for the 10 parishes
25 in Southeast Louisiana. For the new commissions



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1 members, our assets, for me, it's kind of like herding
2 cats in comparison to Mike and Murray. We have several
3 large installations, including the headquarters for the
4 Marine Forces Reserve, the U.S. Coast Guard 10th
5 District, which is huge. They serve the Gulf South and
6 into, you know, the middle part of the country. Of
7 course, the Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base in
8 Belle Chasse and the National Guard Jackson Barics. It
9 represents about six or seven percent of our regional
10 economy, so it's huge and very impactful to us. And,
11 you know, I'm just delighted to be sitting with you here
12 today.

13 Thanks to the partnership with LED,
14 we're new guys on the block. We're about two years into
15 this for us. We have three legs of the stool that we're
16 looking at, very similar to my counterparts in this
17 state, awareness, outreach and advocacy.

18 The awareness part of it, you know, our
19 citizens really admire the military, but in our large
20 metro area, sadly, they don't appreciate or truly are
21 they aware of the true presence, so that's one of the
22 things we're working on. We've built a website; we
23 produce materials and we're looking for opportunities to
24 be ambassadors and work through other business
25 organizations to get the word out about the



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1 installation.

2 I wanted to just, since the last
3 meeting, two particular examples I just wanted to share
4 in terms of outreach that we've been involved with. The
5 first is IT Everywhere, a program that we're running in
6 support of the Statewide Jump Start Initiative.
7 Primarily it's focused on offering high school youth
8 access to industry-validated credentials. And here you
9 see Commander Delarge. He's head of the SPAWAR
10 programs, which is the military warfare information
11 systems for the world, actually. He provided a
12 presentation to 18 educators from around five parishes
13 on the types of skills he's looking for in order to hire
14 people. I think he has over 800 folks at the UNO campus
15 there.

16 Another recent example I wanted to
17 briefly share was Operation Spark. Again, it's how do
18 we demonstrate the fastest routes to careers in software
19 development in the state, and we're looking for
20 opportunities to reach out to veterans in order to
21 encourage their career development in information
22 technology. To that end, actually Template, a veteran
23 from Pierre Part, Louisiana, joined the Air Force at 19.
24 She's been hired recently, specifically on the Operation
25 Spark Team, to help recruit veterans to get more engaged



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1 and to participate and take advantage of career
2 development opportunities.

3 I'm going to talk the most about
4 advocacy. We have a couple two things that I
5 particularly want to focus on this morning. Obviously
6 we're trying to protect and grow our regional military
7 installations, and it's very critical to us. The first
8 issue is the FA18 Hornets out of Belle Chasse. We have
9 one of the two remaining reserve wings out of Belle
10 Chasse with 24 around the country, 24 aircraft. Those
11 are aging airplanes, and we've not been successful in
12 getting the attention to provide the necessary
13 maintenance and support to extend the life of those
14 aircraft, so they're at risk. They represent hundreds
15 of jobs in the Metro New Orleans area, so it's of a
16 large concern to us.

17 For the past two years, we've been
18 working very hard to make sure money was an
19 appropriations to provide the funding to extend the life
20 of that aircraft. It's an important interim solution as
21 we're waiting for the F35 to come to the play.

22 One thing that -- and opportunity
23 that -- the first issue I'd like to emphasize in that
24 regard is that we've become aware that there are Kuwaiti
25 aircraft that are available that would be a wonderful



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1 solution. They have a minimum number of hours and
2 they've been maintained by US contractors. So we're
3 talking to our delegation and we're trying to generate
4 support as, again, a great interim solution to extend
5 that operation and to, you know, put our best foot
6 forward in that regard.

7 We're working specifically with
8 Congressman Graves and Congressman Palazzo from
9 Mississippi to try to put the full-court press on Vice
10 Admiral Braun to try to make that happen.

11 So the other issue I wanted to mention
12 was around the Air National Guard also operating out of
13 the Belle Chasse facility. I talked to Colonel Mike
14 McDermott, who's the Vice Commander there, late in the
15 week last week. They completed what is referred to as
16 the Air Force basing criteria for the F35, and in all
17 metrics, we are at the top of the heap to receive an Air
18 National Guard squadron. They're going to be awarding a
19 lump over the next couple of years. Site visits are to
20 take place between now and December. They're going to
21 visit six to nine sites. And the folks in the Air Guard
22 were, shall we say, very confident that we were going to
23 have visits and we were really at the top of the heap to
24 potentially get one of those units. In the meantime,
25 we've come to find out that Hill Air Force Base and, of



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1 all places, Burlington, Vermont, had been awarded the
2 first two site visits. And what's that word of the
3 year? Boast truth? It's like we're in a circumstance
4 where objectively, you know, we should be at the top of
5 the list for a visit in one of the squadrons, but it's
6 very clear that politics has come into play. So we're
7 very quickly -- as a matter of fact, Colonel McDermott
8 is in Washington as we speak now briefing the Louisiana
9 Delegation on, you know, why we're qualified. And, you
10 know, again, under all of the different metrics of
11 maintenance, preparedness, safety, you name it, we
12 should have it. So he's going to be talking especially
13 to Steve Scalise and the rest of the delegation to line
14 up support for the F35.

15 Kind of concurrently, the thought was
16 that the existing care aircraft that they're flying, the
17 F15C, would be extended into the mid-2022 to 2026. We
18 received all kind of recognitions and awards for that
19 program. Unfortunately, there's been a change in
20 command over that part of the Air Force, and the money
21 that was required to, I think the term is, schlep, to
22 extend the life of that hardware, the F15s on our base
23 is now -- the 2-billion is now not going to be included
24 in the budget. This we just found out within the last
25 couple weeks, so it's a bit of a perfect storm for us



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1 that we had this confidence that we would be at the top
2 of the heap for the F35, and to find that out that the
3 F15 is now at risk when we thought it was like gold till
4 2026, so...

5 Concurrently, while Colonel McDermott is
6 in Washington, he's helping to also create awareness
7 with our delegation of the importance of extending the
8 life of the F15 as an important solution while the F35s
9 are in the run.

10 So those are kind of the things that are
11 keeping us up at night and things we're very focused on
12 for SEMA.

13 In terms of additional opportunities,
14 obviously, my colleague, Bruce Keller, will talk a
15 little bit about Belle Chasse, so I'll defer to him, but
16 any MILCON defense budget dollars that are there to
17 support infrastructure at that base or any of our other
18 units, we're going to be pursuing, obviously.

19 And then another opportunity is to
20 commercialize the runway at Belle Chasse. We're looking
21 at, I believe, the east and to potentially develop an
22 industrial park and commercialize the runway in
23 partnership with the Navy so that we can bring business
24 development to Plaquemines Parish. So we've done the
25 necessary beginning steps, and I've gotten initial



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1 approval from the Navy to begin the process, so kind of
2 an exciting potential economic development opportunity
3 for Plaquemines Parish.

4 I think those are the main points I
5 wanted to cover. Do y'all have any questions or
6 comments?

7 MR. REESE:

8 Just in your Air Force F15 fight to
9 secure that mission at Belle Chasse, at any point we can
10 help in terms of our aerial moving target range as the
11 types of training that may be available over at JRTC to
12 improve sort of that military value of your
13 installation, we'll provide you with all of the data we
14 can and provide you training venues that are closely
15 related to Belle Chasse that could be helped.

16 MR. SILBERT:

17 Thank you. Good point.

18 SECRETARY PIERSON:

19 Any additional comments on behalf of
20 Calendar Commitment?

21 MR. KELLER:

22 Yeah, I'll be making some comments.

23 SECRETARY PIERSON:

24 Come forward. Thank you.

25 MR. KELLER:



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1 Good morning, everybody. I'm Bruce
2 Keller. I work at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve
3 Base. I work for the COO of the base.

4 Murray, you were talking earlier about
5 encroachment being one of your concerns there.

6 Actually, the Navy, and as I understand it now, the Air
7 Force is also hiring people in the environmental program
8 to -- specialists to actually deal with, for the
9 commanding offices, to deal with encroachment issues.
10 My background is a professional land use planner, and I
11 work for the COO as a technical advisor for encroachment
12 purposes, so noise concerns, getting out into the
13 community working with economic development folks,
14 working with the zoning folks in getting that word out
15 as to what the impacts are and how to mitigate them is
16 part of the function that I perform there.

17 I also sit in on our Calendar Commitment
18 meetings with Stan Mathes. Stan Mathes is not able to
19 be here today. His mother-in-law had a stroke
20 yesterday, so his family is with them with her, so he
21 sends his regards to everyone. So I thought I'd just
22 spend a quick minute going a little bit further with
23 what Gary was talking about in terms of the shared or
24 potential shared use of the runway at the base.

25 Because of all the uncertainty that's



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1 going on with the mission at the Naval Air Station, it
2 is one of two naval reserve bases in the country, Naval
3 Air Reserve bases. The other one is in Fort Worth. We
4 are looking to, under the auspices of encroachment
5 primarily, but also, you know, as a safeguard to keeping
6 mission going at the installation, looking at the
7 potential for sharing the runway. That may not be a
8 doable thing elsewhere, but here, the usage of the
9 runway, runways, the two runways that we have, is not
10 maximum. It's fairly close to minimum. So sharing the
11 runway may make some sense in terms of supporting,
12 financially supporting, the mission that is happening
13 there. So we -- the Navy has been, the base commanding
14 officer has been approached by the Plaquemines Port
15 around the Mississippi River, of course, and so the Port
16 of Plaquemines has been a fledgeling unit for decades at
17 this point, and it looks like it's picking up some speed
18 now, picking up some steam. I guess it's going to have
19 an L&G plan on its grounds within the next few years.
20 So there's some seed money there from that project to
21 move the Port concept forward. I know LED is involved
22 in that to a certain extent in terms of understanding
23 what's happening there.

24 So the base has been approached by the
25 Port as part of a Port Master Planning Process to have



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1 air cargo be included with them, and that would open up
2 the potential to requests from the Navy on a limited
3 basis the usage of the runways. So what is happening at
4 this point in time is that the Regional Planning
5 Commission has -- is working as we speak on a
6 feasibility study to see what the market potential is
7 for that kind of endeavor, and we're expected before the
8 next meeting of this group that the base will have
9 gotten a proposal in from the port to actually share the
10 runways. We'll find out some more specifics about it.
11 And it's essentially a two-step process with that, a
12 very long process, several years. One that I know about
13 happening in Santa Rosa County Florida, that was the
14 first one for the Southeast region of the Navy, that
15 took 10 years to accomplish. We should beat that if we
16 go forward with it. But the two-step process is the
17 Commanding Officer of the base will receive the
18 proposal, will look at it from a cursory perspective.
19 There's a Secretary of the Navy instruction that allows
20 for it to happen to begin with, and there's some bullet
21 points of what is important to even allowing that to
22 happen. So if it passes the straight face test at the
23 Commanding Officer level, it will go up to his boss, a
24 1-Star General -- a 1-Star Admiral -- excuse me -- and
25 it will go all of the way up to Secretary of the Navy

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1 Department to be vetted. And then if it receives
2 approval at the concept level, then it comes back down
3 to implementation, and there's a naval engineering
4 command that puts together real estate proposals and
5 real estate contracts, and they would do that work. So
6 it's got a while before it gets to that stage, but
7 making people aware of it is important because receiving
8 state support for it and acknowledgement that it's, you
9 know, in the state planning in some format, that it's on
10 the radar screen is very important. So it wouldn't
11 surprise me if Stan Mathes and company sends you some
12 more information in asking for your support for that.

13 So the current Commanding Officer of the
14 base could be around for another year, year and a half,
15 I think. He's very much in support of exploring the
16 idea. First time that that's happened. I think 20
17 years ago, it was an idea that was explored and it was
18 not so well received on the military side, but I think
19 now there's much more willingness to look at it as a
20 potential idea to show up what we do there as well as to
21 find some financial support from using the one runway.

22 So that's the tact work we're on at this
23 point in time. Hopefully Gary and company will be able
24 to find some support. We get a lot from SEMA in terms
25 of that. Calendar Commitment is a very small group and



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1 actually went by the Economic Development Department for
2 Plaquemines Parish, which itself is going through some
3 financial stress, so hopefully things will move forward,
4 but that's a really big proposal, the big plan at this
5 point in time. Hopefully there will be more information
6 at the next meeting of this group.

7 So that's it for me. Thank you.

8 SECRETARY PIERSON:

9 Thank you, Mr. Keller.

10 MR. KELLER:

11 All right.

12 SECRETARY PIERSON:

13 Mr. Goode, the Roosevelt Group.

14 MR. GOODE:

15 All right. I'll keep this -- I'll move
16 this along quickly. I know we're getting close to
17 lunch.

18 Thanks again for having me.

19 Quick update, just let me give you a
20 quick update on the Roosevelt Group, who we are, some
21 new members to our team, somewhat of a perspective on
22 the remaining actions and the 114th Congress, what we're
23 seeing with the new administration, quick perspective on
24 BRAC and a little bit about our advocacy and our next
25 steps with Barksdale Forward and Fort Polk Progress.



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1 We've expanded our team really to
2 reflect the requirements that our clients have put on
3 us. As you can see, you know, we're very heavy Air
4 Force and Army, which is partly a reflection of the
5 folks we work with. We're now working with Harry
6 Disbrow, Dis, former fighter pilot, lot of experience in
7 A3 and A5. His wife happens to be the Undersecretary of
8 the Air Force, but Dis brings a lot of requirements
9 background, big programmatic decisions, served, you
10 know, very closely with the JROC, the Joint Requirements
11 Council, just an institutional smart guy.

12 Mike Aimone, you know, you hear a lot
13 now about energy surety and resilience on installations,
14 that's not going to go away, and we had a weakness there
15 and we knew we had to get smarter on it, so Mike is
16 working with us now. Mike started the Air Force Energy
17 Office and also worked for OSD in the Operational Energy
18 Office. You know, when it comes ESCOs and ESPCs, you
19 know, and any kind of big contract in renewable energy
20 and energy surety, he is -- he's the man. Electrical
21 engineer as well. He's studying now to get his HAM
22 radio certification, so it's harder to get ahold of him
23 until he passes that test.

24 Sid Clark, former Senior Advisor of the
25 National Guard. Sid is technically works -- Sid works



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1 for Booz Allen, but he's giving us a few hours from a
2 National Guard perspective. He's really a bright guy.

3 We've had Bud Wyatt on the team since we
4 started the company, but Bud is a judge in Oklahoma, but
5 between Sid and Bud, we have the Guard covered.

6 Scott Taylor was one of the original
7 guys working the Air Force Strategic Basing Process.
8 Scott started the whole F35 process in terms of basing.

9 So the top, you know, our full-time,
10 myself, John Simmons, Kathleen Ferguson, who's a former
11 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
12 Installations. Kevin Felix is our Army guy. And the
13 rest are really -- they're 1099. You know, we use them
14 when we need them, and it works out. It works out
15 great.

16 I'm not going to bore you with this, but
17 just a quick overview. This is the final map, and as
18 you can see, Michigan still has not been counted, 16
19 votes. Trump won Michigan by 13,000 votes, but the
20 counties have until November 22nd to count them. So
21 that's the final tally. 50 and 51 races called. 51st
22 races, Washington, DC, three electoral votes.

23 So now you're in a transition, 4,000
24 jobs, a quarter of them have to be senate confirmed.
25 So, you know, that's the big ones, the cabinet



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1 positions, the folks when you go to the Pentagon, you
2 talk to deputy assistants and assistant secretaries,
3 they're not go going to just show up. They have to be
4 confirmed. And the rest are, you know, staff.

5 So back to Congress, you know you're in
6 a lame duck session; right? So what we're looking at is
7 funding, you know, appropriations. You were on a
8 continuing resolution through the 9th of December. That
9 continuing resolution rode on the FY17 MILCON VA Bill.
10 That was the only one of 12 appropriations bills that
11 was actually passed and sent to the White House and
12 signed into law, and that's what got you through this
13 congressional continuing resolution, of which Louisiana
14 does have MILCON projects. Murray mentioned one of
15 those.

16 So now we sent through an Army bus, you
17 know, a big package of appropriations bills. There's
18 going to kind of be little mini buses or is it going to
19 be a full or partial year CR. It's going to be the last
20 as of today as of this morning. Hal Rogers basically
21 said this morning, "We're done doing appropriations.
22 We're just going to punt it into a FY -- into Calendar
23 Year 17." You know, I'm a Republican from
24 Massachusetts, just fair disclosure. First bad move by
25 Republicans. They're very good at shooting themselves



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1 in the foot. Just from a personal perspective, they
2 should have just, you know, worked with Harry Reid, got
3 this all cleared up and moved on, but, you know, they're
4 greedy.

5 Okay. So there are no appropriations
6 for the end of year. We're going to go into a CR and
7 we're going to try to sort it out while we're trying to
8 sort out all of these new initiatives that the Trump
9 Administration wants to take on.

10 So how does that affect the
11 Authorization Act? It probably won't. I think you'll
12 still get an Authorization Act. The Authorization Bill,
13 that's the policy, the pay raises, the Guantanamo Bay
14 issues, the Sage grouse. Any policy issue gets put into
15 that Authorization Act. The only thing that was really
16 slowing that up was how much of the OCO money the
17 Republicans were going to take to put towards things
18 like readiness. The Republicans wanted to take
19 18-billion. The Democrats didn't want to take any, and
20 they kind of cut that in half and agreed that 9-billion
21 will come out of the overseas contingency account and
22 pay for things like Army troop strength, which is
23 important. So some of the cuts from last year are going
24 to get rolled back. I don't think all of them, but like
25 the Alaskan Airborne Brigade will now be funded.



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1 So back to the Continuing Resolution,
2 these are locked in. Barksdale absolutely gets a
3 \$21-million facility in its Joint Reserve until
4 Senator -- I'm assuming that's not at Belle Chasse --
5 for 11-million. So that's good. Those are good
6 projects.

7 So then the base, you know, you've got
8 your leadership elections. The House GOP already had
9 their leadership elections. You know, Paul Ryan was
10 voted in unanimously. He still has -- there's still an
11 actual election for the Speaker on January 3rd. He'll
12 win. The current CR expires. Your state Senate House
13 races are December 10th, 115th convenes on January 3rd
14 and inauguration on the 20th.

15 All right. So looking at Trump, this is
16 just what he's said. There's nothing magical that I
17 know here, but he -- the administration has said, "We
18 want a 20 percent increase in defense spending. We want
19 to increase the size of the Army, 475 back to 540."
20 That's great. Fighters, ships, aircraft, missile
21 defense.

22 So who's going to be the Secretary of
23 Defense? You know, this is just a moving target. You
24 know, even Tom Cotton now has been looked at, Kelly
25 Ayotte, Mike Wynne. The more interesting, the Secretary



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1 of the Navy, Air Force and Army hasn't really been
2 spoken a lot in the press, but, you know, we're hearing
3 Van Hipp, former Army Reserve Principal Assistant
4 Secretary for the Army. This former Congressman in
5 Oklahoma, I have no idea who he is. Randy Forbes is
6 somebody we work with very, very closely. We know his
7 staff real well. That looks to be pretty good entail
8 that he will take over Secretary of the Navy. He's a
9 great guy, smart guy.

10 Okay. So for us, you know, we know the
11 Secretaries for Civilians haven't been appointed. We
12 have a very clear idea who we need to really focus on.
13 A lot of these guys are new and woman are new, and these
14 are the types of people that are money to us. You know,
15 not just Goldstein. We know about that, but, you know,
16 Robin Rand, the Bill Benders, the Weinsteins, the
17 Maryanne Millers in the same town on the Army side.
18 Those are the people that make the decisions that affect
19 us directly.

20 So on BRAC, this is very interesting.
21 I'm almost done. You know, we have got into this battle
22 rhythm for the last eight years where Congresses just
23 asks for a BRAC, and -- I'm sorry -- the President and
24 the Secretary of Defense asks for BRAC and Congresses
25 says no, and that's just been what happens. So, you



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1 know, don't worry about the rest of that slide. We all
2 know it's at the capacity and Congress hates it, blah,
3 blah, blah.

4 But in reality, now that Trump is in
5 there, Trump has a decision to make because if he's
6 going to put 55-billion more into the department, that
7 means more planes, that means more soldiers, so he's
8 basically, you know, saying, "Hey, that excess capacity,
9 I may very well need." So in the end, he also needs
10 money. So in FY18, that budget request is going to come
11 up in January and somebody's going to advise Trump --
12 and this will get to his level -- "Mr. President, you
13 know, we really could use BRAC because it's excess
14 capacity. You're a real estate guy, you understand
15 this," but at the same time, somebody else ought to be
16 saying, "No. Wait, because we need that capacity, and
17 don't just start closing bases again. It's not very
18 popular." The only people that are going to do that,
19 frankly, are guys like him. You know, well, I mean,
20 he's a Democrat. I get that. But, really, we're going
21 to have to make that decision. I think from the
22 Louisiana perspective, do you want to weigh in with your
23 Republican members and get to Trump, write him a letter
24 and just say, "Hey, if you're really going to rely on
25 excess capacity, why are you going to support a BRAC



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1 that is designed solely to kill excess capacity?" I
2 don't think it's an issue for Barksdale and Fort Polk,
3 but now is the time. The smart communities are going to
4 start to push Trump, you know, one way or another
5 because that decision has to be made fairly soon.

6 So say it gets through; right. So they
7 he says, "Screw it. I want a BRAC round." That's kind
8 of the timeline that you're going to look at. You know,
9 now you're really getting down to, you know, the
10 Pentagon requests it, the House on Services Center on
11 Services mark up their bills, the President signs the
12 bill like he always does late in the year. Then you go
13 into the next year, the data calls start happening, the
14 joint cross service groups stand up, and about midyear,
15 the commissioners get selected and confirmed and then,
16 BAM, September 19th, it's over. It's a quick process.

17 So back to Fort Polk, I think Mike has
18 touched on all of these issues very, very well. You
19 know, I think we're prepared. I think we're getting to
20 a point finally that hopefully we can get some real big
21 and new wins.

22 You know, Barksdale, that top quote is
23 really interesting. This came out of the Air Force
24 Association Air Force Magazine, "Current adventurism by
25 both Russia and China is evidence of the diminishing



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1 currency of creditable American deterrence." I mean,
2 that is a really powerful statement. Murray and
3 Barksdale are in a great position, you know, to really
4 grow and to robust themselves. And there's some, I
5 mean, great stuff happening. Having a MAJCOM, a major
6 command at Barksdale, I mean, that is just -- that's --
7 it is so different five years ago. I mean, having a
8 4-Star at command is, you know, communities begged for
9 that and you got it. So building a road in that base
10 should be a no-brainer, and thankfully he understands
11 that. I mean, I wanted to clap when he said we're
12 building a road. It's like hallelujah, you know.

13 Weapons storage area, you get that
14 \$350-million weapons storage area, this base will never
15 close. It will never close. 50 years. I mean, it's
16 \$350-million.

17 Energy surety, we're going to be coming
18 down here with Mike Aimone and Kathleen in a week and we
19 are going to really talk energy surety. Jennifer
20 Miller, who runs all of the Air Force installations,
21 came down here three weeks, four weeks ago and talked to
22 Robin Rand about this. Teran Judd, who runs all of the
23 partnership programs said, "We want the general
24 quarters," because Rand said, "I want more partnerships.
25 I want to get this done at Barksdale." That's a good



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1 place to be.

2 Green Flag, who knows. You know,
3 that's -- we've been knocking our heads against the wall
4 for five years since the A10s came out. You know, we
5 just keep going and maybe we'll get there.

6 And then syncing the MILCON, you've got
7 to get -- you put money into the road, the Air Force
8 promised they'll build a gate.

9 So closing thoughts, sequestration is
10 still an issue. That's got to go away. I do think it's
11 going to go away. Don't rule out BRAC with the Trump
12 Administration. Again, however, again, it's that
13 capacity versus a process that's designed to kill
14 capacity. And, you know, the rest of this stuff I think
15 we've all covered very well.

16 Lots of new leaders in the Air Force and
17 the Army. Lots of new civilians. We've got to get in
18 there, engage them. If we're not in there, others will
19 be there in our place, so that's what we try do.

20 Any questions?

21 (No response.)

22 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

23 Good job.

24 MR. GOODE:

25 Thanks.



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1 SECRETARY PIERSON:

2 Thank you, Chris.

3 I'll come back to one of the points that
4 you made. I know the hour grows. I think we've had a
5 very productive and informative opportunity to get
6 together today.

7 Quickly, to talk about a number of
8 organizational issues that we will conduct on your
9 behalf largely, so if there are questions, concerns or
10 comments, I want to collect them. Included in your
11 packet is our enabling legislation. One of the things
12 that it calls for that the Governor touched on is that
13 we do update our Economic Impact Study on a four-year
14 basis, and it is time. We'll be developing a path
15 forward on that. We'll share that with you and we want
16 you to you know that that's an ongoing activity in our
17 "Old Business" column.

18 Under "New Business," know that we have
19 petitioned the Governor's executive budget to include
20 funds for the continued relationship that we have with
21 the three main primary contracts, those being SEMA, Fort
22 Polk and Barksdale, so we'll continue to ask for those
23 funds. I believe they are included at this time in the
24 Governor's executive budget. You heard him today. I
25 have a higher degree of confidence that we may not be



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1 able to grow. I know we have additional needs, and it
2 would be great to grow the allocation that we have in
3 there, but I think we think can count on status quo and
4 we'll work towards the needs that we have that are
5 critical and those that are identified, but I anticipate
6 that \$500,000 and we won't know for sure until the
7 legislature adjourns next June. But typically we have
8 strong legislative support for our activities, so we'll
9 keep our fingers crossed in that regard, and more so
10 than that, we'll work hard to make sure that that's in
11 there. And there may be times that we call upon you to
12 reach out to your legislators to help us if we sense
13 that there's any threat to that resource that we know,
14 although, it is very important.

15 Mike, I think you addressed
16 public-public partnerships. Certainly we're glad to
17 hear that that's actively being engaged at Barksdale as
18 well. And, Gary, at least we can share that best
19 practices in the Greater New Orleans area. We know that
20 you've got the leadership here both in Washington and in
21 our state to assist with that.

22 One of the areas the Governor commented
23 on and one that our Executive Director, Sherri
24 McConnell, will be working towards is the concept around
25 this reciprocity. There are other states that are doing



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1 it. There may be some areas where we get some pushback.
2 There's a lot of professions that fall into this. Some
3 are easier than others, such as healthcare, say, nurses
4 that come, and educators, teachers that come, they have
5 national standards that they can meet, and those are
6 easier for us to get buy in, perhaps, in a reciprocity
7 scenario, but we'll be looking at those activities.

8 The Governor has directed us to seek out
9 ways that we can provide an easier pathway for military
10 spouses to gain employment in our communities, and I
11 don't have to go into for all of us why we think that's
12 a great idea.

13 I would like to pause for a moment and
14 call on Jim Hill if there's any update. One of the
15 things that we've been canvassing for a State of
16 Louisiana civilian aide to the Army. It's an unpaid
17 position, but one that helps a lot with communication
18 between our state and the Pentagon.

19 MR. HILL:

20 Yeah. I'll take just about two minutes.
21 I had a bunch of slides, but we're not going to show
22 those. I really didn't.

23 I'm the Civilian Aide to the Secretary
24 of the Army for the State of Louisiana. Every state has
25 one, at least one. Army is the only service that has



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1 it, and it's tied to an active-duty Army installation,
2 JRTC Fort Polk. Texas has four; Alabama has two.
3 Secretary Fanning, when he took office as the Secretary
4 of the Army, decided that he had about 10 to 13
5 metropolitan areas that he wanted a representative in.
6 I'm the Secretary's representative for the state. I
7 kind of feed back to him; he feeds back to me. We get
8 together at least once or twice a year, and he has
9 identified the New Orleans Metropolitan area as the
10 location that he wants. We've submitted some names up,
11 several different groups have submitted some names up.
12 It's a slow, slow process to go through. With the
13 change in administration, I have not heard what affect
14 that might have because we'll have eventually a new
15 Secretary of the Army. So we'll monitor that, and maybe
16 next time have a little more advice to give to you,
17 Secretary Don. Thank you very much.

18 SECRETARY PIERSON:

19 Thanks for working that initiative for
20 us, Jim. We greatly appreciate it.

21 Before I open the floor, I'll just
22 indicate that there's a strong probability, as directed
23 by the Governor, that our next meeting will be off site,
24 probably in the vicinity of Barksdale Air Force Base in
25 Northwest Louisiana.



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1 One of the great pieces of information
2 that we have now is that around the April 27 timeframe,
3 and there's a document to this effect in your packet as
4 well, but one of our partnering organizations, the
5 Military Child Education Coalition, is going to conduct
6 what they call a convening in Northwest Louisiana. It's
7 not limited to Northwest Louisiana. In fact, we'll get
8 you some more information, but our goal would be to
9 bring some of the school superintendents around the Fort
10 Polk area, around the Greater New Orleans area, those
11 superintendents that have military children in their
12 census would be the appropriate target audience for us
13 to share a lot of information around academics, advocacy
14 and access to opportunity and how we integrate our
15 school systems in a way that supports our military
16 installations. It all goes back to making the airman or
17 the soldier happy, making his family happy as well,
18 making them want to continue their military service.
19 That whole framework of being content and feel like
20 you're contributing and your life's making a difference
21 is only made possible when your family feels good about
22 where they are, and that starts with the kids getting a
23 good education. And we've been able to make some really
24 great strides in that regard with a state-of-the-art
25 elementary school that's now at Fort Polk, but there's a

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1 lot of other ways and programs available that we can
2 implement. So that's what this meeting will be about.
3 It will be at Barksdale and it will be around April
4 27th. We may find a way that we can integrate this
5 meeting in that timeframe, but I don't have a specific
6 timeframe for you to save the date yet, but we'll be
7 working to identify that with the Governor's schedule to
8 at least give him the opportunity to attend. His
9 schedule changes, so we may pin a date and then we may
10 not get to see him, but we'll certainly try to pin a
11 workable date for the Governor and our group to be
12 hosted, and we'll do that in coordination with the
13 Barksdale officials as well.

14 Finally, what you see on the screen here
15 is a small piece of what's in our Economic Quarterly.
16 That's a publication that LED puts out. It used to be
17 in print. It's strictly electronic now. That helps us
18 take down some of the costs. But one of features this
19 month is around our military infrastructure, and if you
20 get a chance to go to OpportunityLouisiana.com and
21 then -- that's our website, you can take a Google just
22 to Louisiana Economic Development and get there as well.
23 But under our publication of EQ, we have links. It also
24 gives some information about all of our military
25 installations, so a nice highlighting of the important



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1 role that the military installations play in Louisiana
2 economy is featured up there this month.

3 At this time, I will concluded my
4 remarks and open the floor to any member or public
5 comments.

6 MR. GATTI:

7 I have one comment. I just received an
8 unconfirmed report that nine marines have died and are
9 fighting right now as we speak. I think as we make
10 decisions to support family and spouses, I think we have
11 to realign ourself with the fact that it's going on
12 right now, and so I'd just like to ask the speaker, if
13 possible, take a moment of silence for these servicemen
14 and their families.

15 SECRETARY PIERSON:

16 Yes. Let's pause for a moment of
17 reflection.

18 (Whereupon a moment of silence was
19 observed.)

20 SECRETARY PIERSON:

21 All right. Thank you very much for
22 bringing that to our attention, Mr. Gatti.

23 If there are any other comments --
24 please turn your badges in. We will retain those for
25 our next meeting. Thank you for your travels here



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1 today, for your service, and we'll now entertain a
2 motion to adjourn.

3 Moved by Jim Hill; second by Ms.
4 Randolph.

5 All in favor, say "aye."

6 (Several members respond "aye.")

7 SECRETARY PIERSON:

8 Thank you for your attention and
9 participation today.

10 (Meeting concludes at 12:22 p.m.)

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17 That I am not related to counsel or to the
18 parties herein, nor am I otherwise interested in the
19 outcome of this matter.

20

21 Dated this 8th day of December, 2016.

22

23

ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR
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