

# Seven firms vie for Belvoir-bound military jobs

By William C. Flook  
Examiner Staff Writer

Seven firms have entered the tug-of-war to house thousands of military jobs once bound for a former explosives range at Fort Belvoir, according to an Army spokesman.

The proposals signal widening interest in providing a new home to the 6,200 Washington Headquarters Services employees, who are relocating under federal Base Realignment and Closure orders. Their final destination remains the single largest uncertainty in Fort Belvoir's 19,000-strong job influx.

The seven submissions, sent to the Army Corps of Engineers over the past two months, may also bring new competition to the two other Northern Virginia tracts already under consideration for the jobs: a federal warehouses site in Springfield and the "Victory Center" in Alexandria.

Army spokesman Dave Foster declined to name the groups or specifically identify the proposed sites, citing procurement regulations. A separate military source, however, said all are in Northern Virginia and some are close to the Pentagon.

Only one of the firms, American Building Corp., has made its plan public. The company earlier this

month submitted a proposal to put the jobs on a 116-acre cut of land near the Manassas Park Virginia Railway Express station. The proposal also includes new office space, retail businesses and homes, as well as a city hall, library, civic center and \$50 million memorial. The idea was quickly endorsed by the Manassas Park City Council.

"We feel like we have a great complete package," said Janet Dorn, a spokeswoman for the project.

Some Fairfax County officials have said they prefer sending at least some of the employees to the Springfield site, which is now filled with General Services Administration warehouses, because of its proximity to both

Metro and Virginia Railway Express stations.

"I hope the Army realizes that sticking 6,200 people in one place either means gridlock close in, or difficulty filling positions by forcing them to commute to the ends of the Earth," said Fairfax County Supervisor Dana Kaufman, whose district encompasses Springfield.

The Army first planned to put the jobs on Belvoir's 800-acre Engineer Proving Ground, but deferred that move after pressure from Kaufman and other supervisors and congressmen who said the location would cause a traffic disaster.

wflook@dcaexaminer.com