



## Brooks City-Base plans include aerospace program

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SAN ANTONIO — "We have a targeted strategic plan," said Don Jakeway, president and CEO of the Brooks Development Authority.

That plan may send the Alamo City into space, and not for the first time. In addition to a world-class research and development park with a focus on medical and pharmaceutical fields, Jakeway sees a future for a civilian aerospace program on the City-Base site.

Although many area residents think Brooks City-Base is the retail park of big-box stores near the intersection of Goliad Road and S.E. Military Drive just off I-37, this is but the tip of the iceberg. That 62-acre retail development was sold, with the proceeds funding infrastructure, such as roads, water supply, and sewers, for further development of the base. The U.S. Air Force remains a tenant on part of the remaining 1,400 acres, along with DPT Laboratories; they will be joined by a new Baptist hospital, replacing the aging Southeast Baptist Hospital. These are part of the plan to make Brooks City-Base a landmark research and development park, and much more, if Jakeway holds to his vision.

Not far from Jakeway's office at Brooks City-Base is the site where President John F. Kennedy stood on Nov. 21, 1963, hours prior to his assassination, and announced to the United States and the world, " ... This nation has tossed its cap over the wall of space, and we have no choice but to follow it. ... we will climb this wall with safety and with speed — and we shall explore the wonders on the other side."

Men later landed on the moon and returned safely, due to the hard work, research, and dedication of the men and women of the Aerospace Medical Health Center at then-Brooks Air Force Base. Kennedy's assassination meant he did not see this. Jakeway did, however, and his dream for the base as it transitions as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process is at least as visionary as Kennedy's.

"If we package it properly and attract the right private investment, we can create a private aerospace industry," Jakeway said, excitement lighting his face. "Nobody else has the capability of doing it."

With the right private investment and entrepreneurs with imagination and ambition, Jakeway can see the vision becoming reality.

The Air Force will leave the base in 2011. Some equipment and buildings will remain from the aerospace medical facility, which will be used as the foundation for the new program.

"Our campus is being developed to take advantage of 1,400 acres of opportunity," Jakeway said. "In four years, what you see now will be a transformation for the South Side. We're building new beginnings on an old foundation. [Kennedy's] vision is the strength we'll build on."

The aerospace program is just part of the base's redevelopment. Watch for more on the Brooks City-Base transition plans in future issues of the Wilson County News.

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