

Written by Alexandra Krasov  
Monday, 18 July 2011 13:28

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## **IA & IL DELEGATION MEMBERS TO GENERAL: ANY PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE JMTC WOULD FACE BIPARTISAN RESISTANCE IN CONGRESS**

*Members question cost savings as Army awaits task force recommendations*

**Washington, DC** – Today, Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) and the bipartisan delegation that represents the Rock Island Arsenal made clear to General Ann Dunwoody, the Commanding General of the Army Materiel Command, that any proposal to close or relocate Rock Island Arsenal's Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC) would be met with strong resistance in Congress. In a meeting in Washington, Dunwoody reassured the Iowa and Illinois delegation that the Army currently has no plans to close the JMTC, but could not disclose the work of an internal task force that was rumored to have been considering JMTC closure as a cost-savings measure.

Members of Congress in today's meeting – U.S. Representatives Bruce Braley (D-IA-01), Bobby Schilling (R-IL-17), and Dave Loebsack (D-IA-02), U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and representatives from Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA)'s office – vowed to continue working with General Dunwoody and the Army to secure the long-term future of JMTC at Rock Island Arsenal.

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**“The Rock Island Arsenal is crucial to the Quad City economy,” said Braley. “There are 1,700 jobs on the line at this facility and none of us are willing to jeopardize them. I'm confident that we made that clear to General Dunwoody, and I was reassured by her praise for the Arsenal and its workers. I will continue to monitor this process and work to make sure that we find ways to save and cut back in places where it makes sense — but not at this crucial facility.”**

“General Dunwoody understands this delegation’s commitment to defending the livelihood of the highly skilled men and women who make up the Rock Island Arsenal,” said Durbin. “It is important that every level of government work to find savings and efficiencies within system, but I firmly believe that closing or relocating the JMTC would be the wrong way to do it. I am glad we were alerted to this task force early in the process so that we can continue to keep a close eye on it as it moves forward.”

“As the Defense Department’s only integrated metal manufacturer, the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center at the Rock Island Arsenal is essential to American troops abroad and to the Quad Cities community,” Senator Kirk said. “Given the importance of the JMTC to arms and armor production, as well as to veteran employment, I firmly believe in defending its position and purpose.”

“We made clear to General Dunwoody that any proposal to move the work that is currently so expertly done at the Rock Island Arsenal JMTC to other facilities would contribute nothing to the Army’s savings target, but would undermine the unique skills and capabilities that have served our war fighters. We’ll have to keep an eye on this task force, but I was pleased to hear the General affirm that the Rock Island Arsenal is a national treasure and express support for our delegation’s efforts to ensure more stable workload in the future,” Grassley said.

“Though today’s meeting was productive, it is of utmost important that we as a delegation remain vigilant as the task force continues its work,” Schilling said. “The Rock Island Arsenal is a national treasure and is of huge economic importance to the Quad Cities. I will continue working to ensure that work or functions at the JMTC and the Rock Island Arsenal are neither reduced nor eliminated as this process continues.”

“This was an important opportunity to sit down with General Dunwoody and the Arsenal delegation to discuss the Army Material Command’s review and reiterate that we will fight any efforts to close or reduce work at the JMTC or RIA to ensure jobs stay in the Quad Cities,” said

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Loeb sack. "I also believe it was critical that we discussed the need to develop a proactive strategy to keep work at the Arsenal as the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan continue. The good jobs, economic development and contributions to our national security provided by the Arsenal and its workforce must be protected."

General Dunwoody was tasked by Army Secretary John McHugh to find savings and efficiencies within the Army Materiel Command as part of an Army-wide review to find \$3 billion in savings. A task force within the Army Materiel Command was asked to perform a review and report its findings to General Dunwoody, likely by the end of the summer.

According to the members in today's meeting, it would be difficult to find savings by closing JMTC as the facility is funded through the Army's Working Capital Fund which derives most of its funding from sales revenue on its contracts, and not through regular congressional appropriations. The members argued that the cost of moving or replicating the many unique capabilities at Rock Island Arsenal would be extensive.

The Rock Island Arsenal JMTC is a one-of-a-kind U.S. Army facility which manufactures critical equipment for our troops around the world. The more than 1,700 highly-skilled individuals – at least half of whom are veterans – employed at JMTC specialize in manufacturing artillery, armor, small arms, and mobile maintenance kits for use on the front lines. The JMTC, perhaps best known for howitzer production, operates the Army's only foundry and since 2003 has produced half of all armor for Army tactical wheeled vehicles. Rock Island Arsenal, the region's largest employer with a 8,600-person workforce anchored by the JMTC, injects \$1.3 billion dollars directly into the local economy each year.

In May, after learning that an internal task force at the Army Materiel Command was considering relocating Rock Island Arsenal's JMTC, the bipartisan group of seven lawmakers from both the Illinois and Iowa Congressional Delegations called for a meeting with McHugh, as soon as possible to discuss their concerns about the cost associated with conducting such a move as well as the impact it would have on the Rock Island Arsenal. A few weeks later, the members received assurances from McHugh that the Army currently has no plans to close the JMTC. Today's meeting was in response to a similar request sent to General Dunwoody in May.

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