



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

NEWS RELEASE

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**NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCES
CHANGES TO SEWARD ARMORY**

**Released by
Maj. Kevin Hynes**

February 10, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LINCOLN, Neb. – Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and Seward Mayor Josh Eickmeier announced today that the Nebraska Army National Guard’s armory in Seward will be undergoing a significant mission change in the upcoming months.

Beginning next month, the armory, which has served as the Nebraska Army National Guard’s primary training center for Seward-based Army Guard Soldiers since 1956, will be transitioned from a readiness center to the home of the Nebraska National Guard’s new state museum. The transition is expected to take several years to complete.

According to the plan, members of the Guard’s Detachment 2, 165th Quartermaster, will begin moving to their new facility at the Mead Training Site in March. This move will allow the unit’s Soldiers, who are responsible for rigging parachutes for personnel and cargo drops, to be located much closer to the current “drop” zones near the Mead Training Site as well as take advantage of a soon-to-be-constructed parachute rigging facility.

Following this move, renovation will begin on the Seward facility to prepare it to receive and store the Guard’s vehicles, displays and historical artifacts that are currently located at the State Arsenal Museum located on the old State Fairgrounds in Lincoln, Neb. The museum has been housed in the historic, two-story brick National Guard arsenal building that dates back to 1913 since the late 1970s. That building is being vacated to make room for the University of Nebraska Innovation Campus that is currently under construction on the old State Fair Grounds.

According to Nebraska National Guard Historical Association members, a non-profit organization made up of current and retired Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen, and civilian volunteers who are responsible for maintaining and operating the museum, they hope to begin moving the museum’s large armored vehicles and other historical artifacts to Seward sometime in early summer.

Those officials say that the major renovations to the building are expected to be done by late June 2015, which will then allow organizers to begin the development and installation of new exhibits that will tell the story of the Nebraska National Guard from its beginnings as a territorial defense force into the modern Nebraska Army and Air National Guard of today that serves as the operational reserve for the U.S. Army and Air Force around the globe, and has seen extensive service in such places as Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

According to Bohac, Seward is a great fit for the Guard’s museum.

“The Nebraska National Guard is excited to bring our museum to Nebraska’s 4th of July City,” said Bohac. “The readiness center will provide us the opportunity to tell about the rich history of the Nebraska National Guard. It is fitting that Seward will be the host city given that

the formation of the National Guard dates back to the first muster when colonists laid down their ploughshare and picked up their muskets to defend their communities against the Red Coats - a call to which Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have been responding to since 1854.”

Mayor Eickmeier echoed those comments.

"I am very proud and honored that our community was chosen as the new home for the Nebraska National Guard museum," Eickmeier said. "This museum will be a great fit in a community already known for its patriotic fourth of July celebrations."

"This is very exciting for Seward," Eickmeier said. "This museum will be yet another feather in our cap that will be a source of community pride."

According to the Nebraska National Guard Historical Association, its members are excited to get started with the move to Seward, which they say will offer them a unique venue in which to tell the Nebraska National Guard's continuing story.

“The movement of the arsenal from its current location to Seward in the coming months will provide a facility with more display, artifact storage, artifact maintenance, and community meeting space than the arsenal building currently provides,” said Byron Diamond, the vice president of the Nebraska National Guard Historical Association. “The Seward facility will also allow the state historian to better provide educational and community outreach services to not only the city of Seward, but to all other communities in the state as well. We are also very excited about the enthusiasm and the community welcome from the citizens and leadership of the city of Seward.”

Once completed, the museum will also provide office and work space for the Nebraska National Guard's state historian, Army National Guard recruiters and potentially one or two small Nebraska Army National Guard detachments.