

## **South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **South Dakota Army National Guard to undergo changes**

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Due to announced restructuring of the U.S. Army force, the South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) will begin to see a reduction in its force in 2012.

The rebalancing being enacted at the national level will cause the SDARNG to trim its current force of nearly 3,400 Soldiers by 258 traditional (part-time) Guard positions and 19 full-time positions by Sept. 30, 2012.

“The National Guard across the country will experience cutbacks, and South Dakota is not immune,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, state adjutant general. “As the Department of Defense adjusts the size and composition of our overall military force because of federal budget cuts, Guard leaders in every state must evaluate how the remaining forces can best be configured to carry out state and federal missions.”

A reduction and reorganization of the force could also result in changes to where National Guard units are stationed. Currently, 29 Army Guard facilities are located in 28 communities throughout South Dakota.

Many of South Dakota’s 29 Army Guard facilities are becoming obsolete. Fourteen armories are more than 40 years old, and nine are more than 50 years old. Funding available for armory maintenance falls far short of what’s needed to adequately maintain the aging facilities.

Earlier this year, \$25 million in federal funds were appropriated to build a state-of-the-art regional readiness center in Watertown. It took 16 years from the start of the state’s efforts to secure that much-needed funding.

“Unfortunately, our ability to secure funding for additional facilities will be impacted by massive federal budget cuts that will be levied on the Department of Defense in the coming years,” Reisch said.

South Dakota Army National Guard leaders have begun a comprehensive analysis of unit stationing, full-time manning and force-structure allocation. Those leaders will make recommendations to the adjutant general in late February, and he will inform the governor and state Board of Military Affairs in mid-March about the recommended changes.

Despite the changes, Reisch is confident in the Guard’s ability to provide support to the state.

“The structure of our force has changed numerous times over the years,” the adjutant general said. “Each time the U.S. Army evolves, the National Guard has a duty to reevaluate itself so it remains relevant, reliable and ready to respond to emergencies anywhere in South Dakota.”

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