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## ***Ninewa PRDC is Stepping up to the Challenge- Iraq Roads are receiving a Face-lift***

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*TIKRIT, Iraq* - As the decision making for construction projects fall more to the local and regional governments, the Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDC) are stepping up to the challenge.

Eleven concrete road paving projects - at the cost of \$3 million - were recently awarded in the Ninewa Province to 10 municipalities. These 11 projects were recommended by the local PRDC.

Created through the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), the PRDC was designed to teach, coach and mentor Iraqi engineers in all aspects of project and reconstruction and development. Committee membership is composed of elected Provincial Council members and Iraqi government engineers, while the PRT representatives serve as advisors to this committee.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plays an important role in the overall PRDC process. "We ensure each PRT is staffed with an engineer officer serving as the PRT lead infrastructure engineer," said Lt. Col. G. Thatch Shepard, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region North. "This PRT engineer serves as an advocate, coach, trainer and mentor for the Provincial Government on infrastructure initiatives. In addition, the engineer serves as the liaison with the construction executing agent, which for this area is generally our Corps local area

office."

The PRDCs objective is to look at proposed projects based on input from each of the communities' local or district Provincial Council under which they serve, establish priorities and attempt to identify funding for those priorities in the order in which they are listed.

These 11 road projects are funded through the Commander's Emergency Relief Response Program (CERP) - one of many funding programs available to the Multi-National Force-Iraq. CERP was developed to provide commanders with means to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance that can be implemented quickly and have an immediate impact on the Iraqi people.

Paved roads do just that. Currently under construction in this area are 58 CERP projects identified by the PRDC.

Projects targeted for this type of funding, are sent through the local Military Support Command's submission process. For many of these projects In the Ninewa Province, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Gulf Region North is specified as the execution agent.

The appointment of the executing agent is determined by several factors: the Support Command's technical qualifications, manpower to execute the project, and many times as the Support Command reaches the end of its tour there is not enough time to complete a project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with its continuing presence in Iraq provides continuity to these projects identified by the Military Support Commands as they transition in and out of the country.

As the execution agent, the Corps advertises the projects to local contractors via local municipal Web sites, awards the contracts and then provides supervision and administration to ensure the construction and contract are successful.

"The PRDC in the Ninewa Province is quite successful," said Lt.Cmdr. Suzanne Montgomery, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers PRT infrastructure engineer. "I attribute their success to the brave Iraqis that refuse to let terrorists and corruption control them and their country."

Security is one small piece of the over all success for Iraq. There must be unity and prosperity as well, and to achieve those there must be strong governance, local businesses and the ability for provincial and local councils to meet and provide direction and guidance.

"These Iraqis serve the people of Ninewa by listening to their constituents and making decisions that benefit the entire province not one religious sect or ethic group," said Montgomery. "Through teaching, coaching and mentoring the PRDC, the political processes continue to mature into an open and transparent government that will be successful long after the U.S. forces leave Iraq."

Scheduled for completion in April 2007, the impact of these roads to the local communities will contribute to the economic activity, emergency response, law enforcement and safe pedestrian travel within Ninewa.

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