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## *Al Anbar Residents Welcome New Fire Station, Water Treatment Facilities*

By Norris Jones  
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**FALLUJAH, Iraq** - Despite ongoing insurgent turmoil in some tough Iraqi neighborhoods, a North Dakota Soldier is seeing a number of projects take shape helping residents there.

Master Sgt. Kevin Mayer, Gulf Region Central district, Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, oversaw the completion of a new fire station last week for Kharma - a city of 75,000 residents near Fallujah, Iraq.

He says the Kharma Fire Chief is thrilled to have that additional capability and three new fire trucks are scheduled to be delivered soon.

That community has two fire stations, an older one in the northeast corner of town, and the newer one now serving residents on the south side where the city's industrial area is also located. "The fire chief is pleased with the quality of construction and the quicker response time two fire stations now offer," Mayer said. Approximately a half-dozen fire fighters are expected to man the facility on a full-time basis.

The \$400,000 project included the construction of a 16x25-meter masonry structure with two bays for four vehicles, sleeping quarters, a kitchen, an office, a conference room, and an emergency generator.

With 28 years service, Mayer is a member of the North Dakota Army National

Guard's 34th Infantry Division and began his one-year deployment in April 2007. His workload also includes supervising the installation of 22 rural water treatment facilities in Al Anbar Province of which four were completed this week. "Potable water is now available in communities ranging in size from 2,500 to 10,000 residents. Their only choice before was taking raw water directly from canals or the Euphrates River posing serious health risks. This is the kind of work I was hoping to be involved with, improving the lives of Iraqi families."

Mayer knows something about meeting people's needs. In his civilian career, he's been the Public Works supervisor for 16 years at Casselton, ND, a town of 2,200 residents. He's in charge of the city's water and sewer system, road work, park repairs, and trash/garbage pickup. "There's something very satisfying in working through the challenges and assisting others."

Mayer says his wife Fran and two daughters, Brittany, 18, and Brooke, 14, are concerned about his deployment to a war zone but are proud of what he's doing in helping rebuild Iraq. He sincerely appreciates the unwavering support Casselton is providing, especially those in his departments who have stepped up and are filling in while he is away.

**Editor's note:** Norris Jones is a public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region Central district, Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact the public affairs office at 544-665-2644 or by email at [CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil). For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).