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Vocational Technical school in Al Kut expands

By Grant Sattler
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AL KUT, Iraq – Finding a good auto mechanic, air conditioning repairman or electrician in Wassit province just got easier.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is managing an Al Kut vocational technical school expansion and renovation to facilities to equip students with trade skills that will help them improve their livelihood, contribute to the local economy and add to Iraq's sustainment capability.

The \$788,852 Commander's Emergency Response Program funded project at the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center supports the Multi-National Division-Central and 3rd Infantry Division's objectives for the Wassit province.

Maj. Clay Morgan, resident engineer of the Wassit Resident Office of the Gulf Region South district, said the repair and expansion project is critical to the maneuver force. "It's also very important for the Al Kut government and especially the headmaster of that particular school," he said. More than 100 students are currently attending the school in six curriculum areas. Capacity is expected to grow up to 175 students as work is completed on a two new workshops.

Work on the project began in October 2007 and includes construction of two workshops, a storage building, and pads for two new back up generators and fuel tanks. Renovation of the existing school building upgraded restrooms for students and staff, repaired water and sewer lines, installed fire suppression, and repaired



Preparations are made for placing concrete for a work shop roof at the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center. Completion of the work will almost double student capacity at the school. (USACE photo by Grant Sattler)



Brickwork awaits plaster for a storage building at the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center. (USACE photo by Kevin Olsen)



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials, Gulf Region Division Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar and Wassit Resident Engineer Maj. Clay Morgan talk with the Iraqi project engineer about construction progress on the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center. (USACE photo by Kevin Olsen)

and repainted interior and exterior walls.

Morgan said the project is giving the school the ability to provide more courses to train young Iraqis and give them a trade. "They do everything from air conditioning, to metal shop to carpentry; even auto mechanics," he said. "It's a very diverse Vo-Tech and a visible part of the Al Kut community."

The construction contractor is from Wassit province and averages 20-30 local workers on the site. "It has been a partnership from the beginning, from the pre-construction meeting..." Morgan said, adding that communication has been very good. "It is always a joy to have a good contractor who sees it as a partnership"

The school is expected to take beneficial occupancy of the new buildings in the spring, however, final completion of the project is awaiting delivery of a generator from outside the country. "It was mutually agreed to get the best generator the funding would allow," Morgan said. "Short term pain for long term gain."



New exterior paint on the existing school building at the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center. (USACE photo by Kevin Olsen)



Workers cut pipe on the grounds of the Al Kut Vocational Technical Center. (USACE photo by Grant Sattler)

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