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## Baghdad counts on local improvements

by Norris Jones  
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*Baghdad, Iraq*— Baghdad is facing some challenging times and for the situation to get better, most officials believe local residents see that their government is working and improvements are taking place.

Maj. Robert Nash, Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) International Zone office, points out his staff is overseeing about 150 projects worth \$500 million to upgrade essential services in Baghdad. “We’re rebuilding gas stations, paving roads, repairing sewer lift stations, installing new potable water networks, and paving roads. We’re also renovating hospitals, building schools, installing neighborhood electric distribution networks, and rehabilitating water treatment plants.”



*Lt. Col. Glen Masset with the 9th Engineer Battalion says they’ve provided portable generators to area schools including 500-liter tanks and fuel. In addition, U.S. Army Corps of*

The new initiative is called Operation Forward with an emphasis on clearing debris and other elements in certain key areas and then a variety of community projects so residents see that things are getting better. “We’ve just started on those new projects,” Nash says. “When fully underway, there will be thousands of Iraqis employed and their work will have a positive impact. As an example, 18 gas stations are being renovated throughout Baghdad and a number of water and sewer issues are being eliminated.”

Nash’s office works with U.S. military units attached to the 1st Cavalry Division including the 9th Engineer Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Glen Masset, who keeps track of all ongoing improvements in the northwest quadrant of Baghdad. Baghdad City Government (Iraq), the United States Agency for International Development, the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team, USACE, and the 9th Engineer Brigade are all sponsoring projects to help the people. “Our top priority is helping the government get on its feet as local and international work to improve various essential services for residents.”

Masset said townspeople gave them a positive response when they started a cleanup program in west Baghdad. “We’re already providing street lighting, getting an abandoned slaughterhouse for cattle and sheep reared, cleaning out a major drainage canal, and providing portable generators to area schools, including 500-liter fuel tanks and 500 liters of fuel.”

*Engineers is renovating several of those schools and building two new ones in Baghdad. [ARMY PHOTO]*

throughout the metropolitan area.

One such example is Doura in south Baghdad, a community of 265,000 residents, where Nash's engineers are overseeing the following projects:

- Construction of two new million-dollar schools.
- Four road projects: (1) paving 35,000 sq. meters of roadway and overlaying 60,000 square meters in Mahalla 856; (2) overlaying 35,000 square meters of roadway in Mahalla 848; (3) paving and overlaying roads in Mahallas 822, 824, 826; (4) paving about 3.7 kilometers of road in Mahallas 850 and 852.
- Four sewage system improvements: (1) rebuilding the sewage pump station in Mahalla 848; (2) replacing generators, electrical panel boards, and pumps, for sewage lift stations in Mahalla 856; (3) constructing a combined sewer in Mahalla 840; (4) repairing a collapsed sewer network in Mahalla 824 which includes 280 meters of 900mm (36 in.) sewer pipe, new concrete manholes, and replacement of the storm drains.
- Construction of a potable water network in Mahalla 824.



*Maj. Robert Nash with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers checks one of the sewer lift stations being rebuilt in Baghdad. [ARMY PHOTO]*

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ticket projects are also part of the eff  
electrical distribution network and mc  
(an area with 2.5 million residents), a  
lines helping the entire metropolitan .  
Abdul-Kareem, one of the Iraqis wo  
noticing a difference. "They're repairi  
haven't had maintenance in 15 years  
That work is getting sewage off the s  
children. These are important indicat

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