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Mahmudiyah takes pride in market renovation

**By Norris Jones
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Baghdad, Iraq— One of the top priorities for the mayor of Mahmudiyah is rebuilding his city's downtown market. "It's the heart of our community," Muayid Fadhil said.

"We are going to build a new market as a memorial to those innocent men, women and children who have been killed there. It will tell the insurgents we will never give up, they cannot stop us."

That market has been the target of numerous insurgent attacks in the past year. Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing a \$245,372 project to construct new market stalls with overhead cover, and renovating storefronts along the street that have been damaged by bomb blasts and small arms fire. That work includes new doors, windows, stucco and paint, as well as new gates at each entrance of the market.

About 100,000 residents in the Mahmudiyah area (located 20 miles south of Baghdad) utilize the market and local farmers bring in their produce and meat for local consumption. It's a main economic engine of the community "and our residents really appreciate the improvements that are underway," the mayor noted.

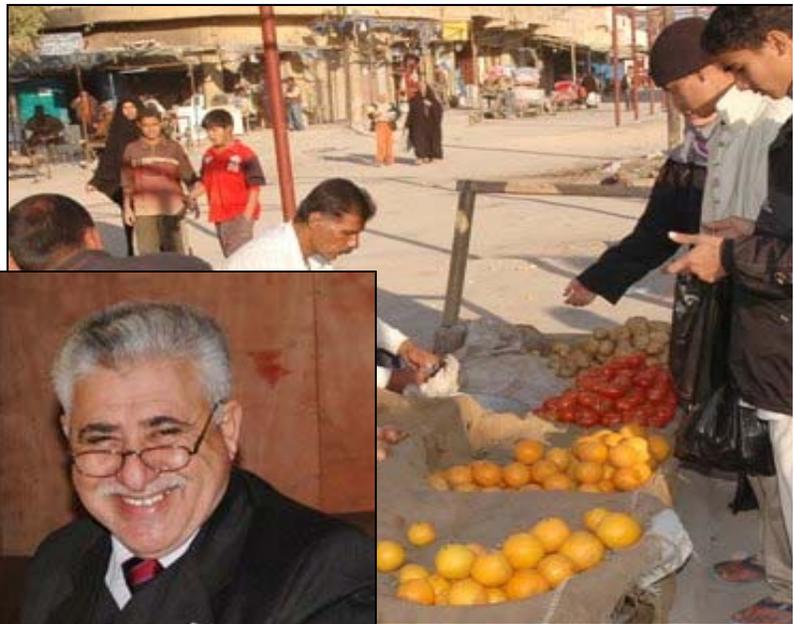
Maj. Steve Martinelli, Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Victory Resident Office South, says the market is a gathering place where families interact. "It's a source of community pride and provides a semblance of normalcy that's great to see," Martinelli said.

Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser, Commander of Task Force 2-15FA, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, agrees and points out the market renovation clearly demonstrates that



Mahmudiyah's democratically elected government is working and improvements are taking place.

"Those officials are listening to their townspeople and getting things done," Morschauser said. "We've talked to the shopkeepers and they're very happy with what's going on. This is an excellent example that Iraqi officials are in the lead."



Mahmudiyah Mayor Muayid Fadhil and Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser
[ARMY PHOTO]

primary healthcare center, school renovations, new power lines, and renovation of the water treatment plant pump station. The community also will build a park a few blocks from the market. The market will feature an amphitheater and soccer field.

Regarding the importance of such projects, Mayor Muayid concluded, "We have seen the effects of terrorism in different ways. We need to offer alternative activities for our children that will keep them away from the insurgents."

The Mahmudiyah market renovation project is expected to be completed by February.

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