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### **Marine Corps Works with Local and Regional Leaders as it Grows Headcount at Eastern North Carolina Installations**

*Jacksonville, N.C., October 12, 2007* – Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue joined Marine Corps Maj. General Robert Dickerson and other officials today in Jacksonville, N.C., to announce the formation of a Military Growth Task Force that will ready seven Eastern North Carolina counties for the arrival of approximately 25,000 active-duty Marines, civilian staff and family members at and around Marine Corps installations in the region through 2011.

“The addition of thousands of Marines and their families to this region is a big economic opportunity, and we welcome them to North Carolina,” said Lt. Governor Perdue. “I have been working with community and base leaders to put into place the critical additional resources, like schools and housing, that this growth demands. We will be ready for them.”

The Military Growth Task Force, organized under the auspices of North Carolina's Eastern Region, will include leaders from Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico and Pender counties, all of which will be affected by growth at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps Air Station New River and the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

Earlier this year, the Marine Corps unveiled “202K Plus-Up,” a five-year plan to increase the nation's total number of active-duty Marines to 202,000 by 2011. Growth would come through recruitment of new Marines and increased retention rates, explained Maj. General Robert Dickerson, Commanding General for Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST). “While the

short term costs associated with absorbing the troop increase will be significant for the surrounding communities, they will be offset by the long-term economic growth in this area, which looks absolutely bright,” said Gen. Dickerson, whose command includes oversight of Marine Corps facilities in the Carolinas, Florida, Georgia and Virginia.

The Military Growth Task Force will seek to tap federal grants for addressing community planning and infrastructure development needs spurred by the arrival of new Marines, their spouses and children, as well as the in-migration of civilian personnel and their families. “We’ll be applying for funds through the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) that will help us ensure our schools, roads, public services and infrastructure can absorb incoming Marines, their families and support staff,” explained Al Delia, president and C.E.O. of North Carolina’s Eastern Region. But the Task Force will also work to ease the transition for new residents themselves, helping connect trailing spouses with job opportunities, for example. “Along with the immediate growth-related challenges, there will be exciting new possibilities for the region in terms of workforce assets, business creation and economic growth,” said Delia.

The Marine Corps’ growth plans at Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point and New River coincide with, but are unrelated to, changes at North Carolina military bases related to the most recent round of Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommendations. Military bases in the region are important job-growth assets, and their growth brings both direct and indirect value to the state’s business community, according to Will Austin, executive director of the North Carolina Military Foundation, which seeks to highlight and enhance the presence of the military as economic engines for the state. “The Foundation looks forward to working with the Military Growth Task Force to ensure its success, and to support the growth of North Carolina’s \$18 billion defense economy,” Austin said.

Established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1993, North Carolina’s Eastern Region works in partnership with state and local governments, educational institutions, business organizations and corporate allies in building economic capacity and effecting job creation and business investment across a 13-county region. For additional information, visit [www.nceast.org](http://www.nceast.org).

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