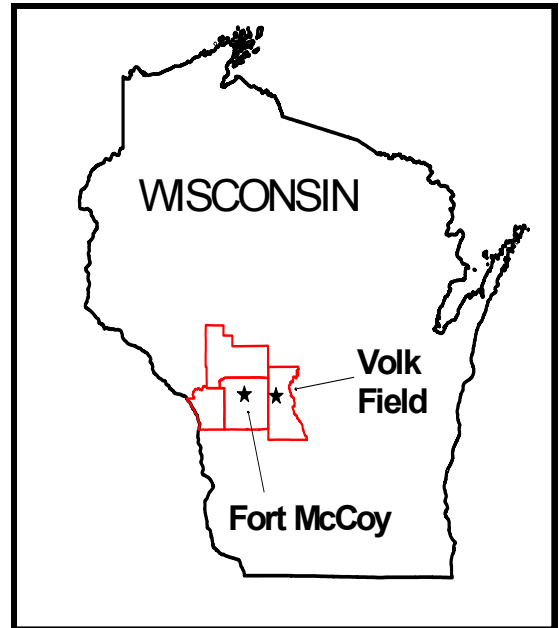


***A PLAN TO POSITION
THE FORT MCCOY AND
VOLK FIELD REGION***

***AS THE BEST FOUR
SEASON REGION
IN THE NATION***

***TO TRAIN AND CARE
FOR OUR NATION'S
DEFENSE PERSONNEL
AND THEIR FAMILIES***



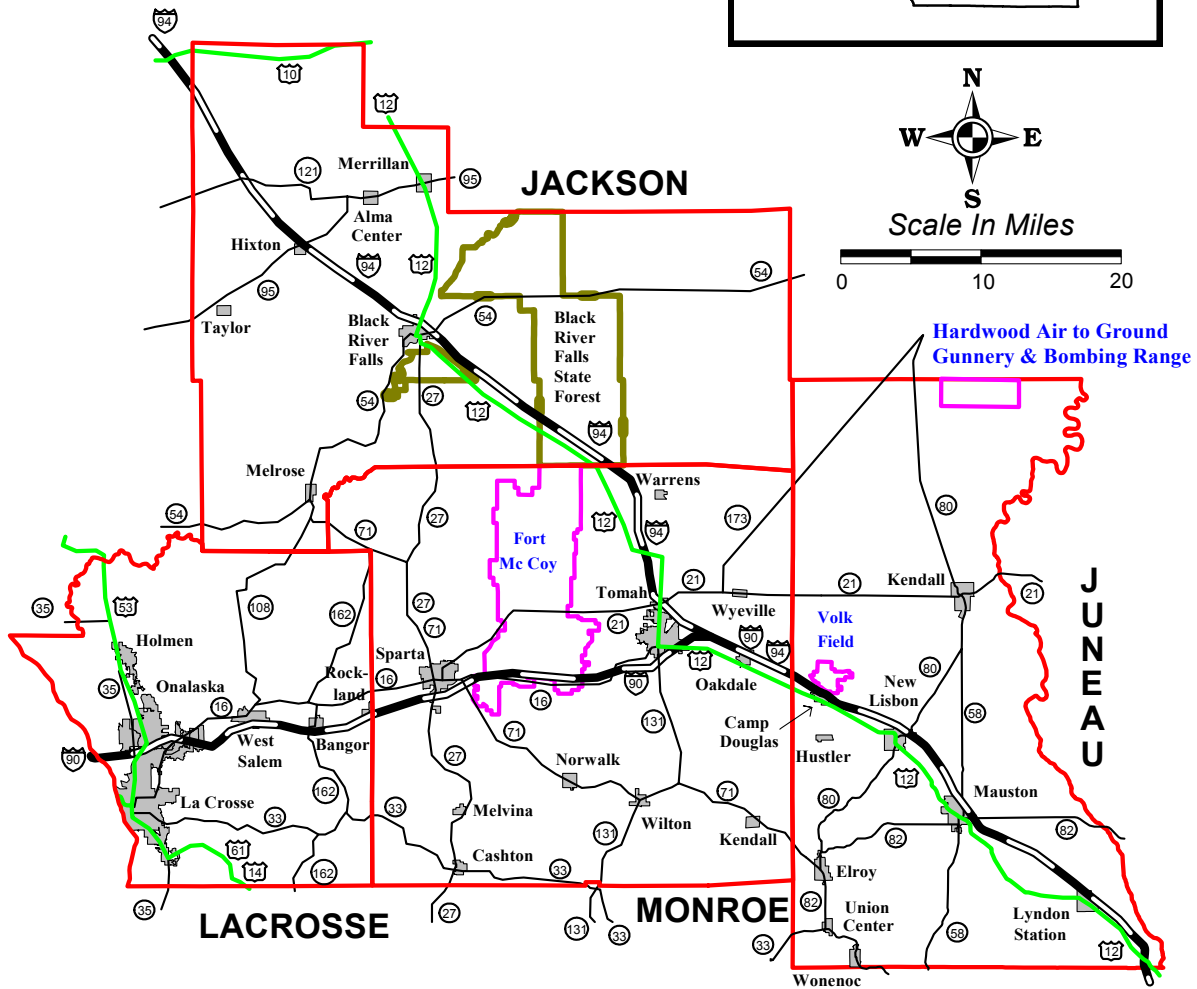
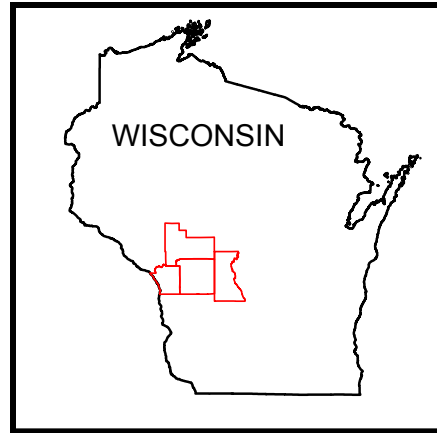
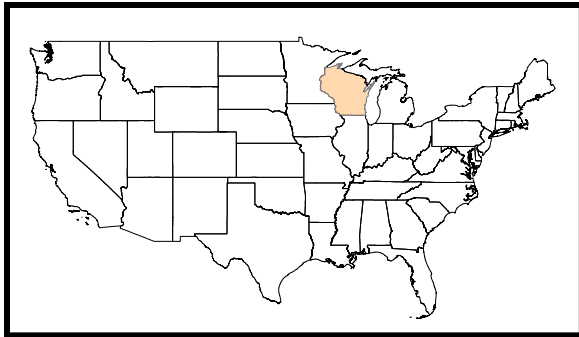
FORT MCCOY



VOLK FIELD

Prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in cooperation with business organizations, our region's federal and state legislators, Governor, and local government officials of Monroe, Jackson, La Crosse and Juneau Counties, October 2004. Funding for this plan was provided by a grant from the State of Wisconsin, Department of Commerce.

THE FORT MCCOY AND VOLK FIELD REGION



The Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region includes Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse and Monroe Counties in Western Wisconsin

A Plan to Position Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region as the Best Four Season Region in the Nation to Train and Care for our Nation's Defense Personnel and their Families was prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in cooperation with business organizations, representatives of our Region's federal and state legislators, Governor, and local government officials of Monroe, Jackson, La Crosse, and Juneau counties.

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A PLAN TO POSITION THE FORT MCCOY AND VOLK FIELD REGION AS THE BEST FOUR SEASON REGION IN THE NATION

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Executive Summary

In 2005, the Base Closure and Realignment Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the military installations throughout the United States due to an estimated 24% Department of Defense installation over capacity situation. In response to the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, local, state, and federal representatives in Western Wisconsin along with local business leaders and residents have cooperatively joined together and developed a plan that illustrates how the resources of this four county region positively impact the missions of Fort McCoy and Volk Field.

The purpose of the plan is to demonstrate that Fort McCoy and Volk Field military installations are vitally important to the economic and social well being of Western Wisconsin and equally important to the homeland security of our Nation. The plan illustrates that Fort McCoy and Volk Field are located in the best four season region in the United States to train and care for our Nation's defense personnel and their families. The plan also focuses on the future and how Fort McCoy, Volk Field, local governments and residents can ensure that the region remains the best four season region in the United States. The plan identifies 24 "action items" that can be undertaken that assist the existing and future mission of the military in the region. The "action items" range from a formal committee of local, state and federal units of government being formed at Fort McCoy and Volk Field to the evaluation of local land use plans, housing needs, transportation enhancements, and matching tenants of the military bases to the resources of the region.

The Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region consists of four counties in western Wisconsin (Juneau, La Crosse, Jackson and Monroe). Combined the military bases employ 3,600 employees, with an annual payroll of \$107 million dollars and a total estimated annual economic impact of \$628 million dollars on the four county region. These numbers clearly demonstrate that over the decades of their existence Fort McCoy and Volk Field have become a key part of the local communities social and economic health. Closure of either facility would have a profound negative impact on the region and further reduce the disproportionate amount of military personnel stationed and federal defense spending in the State of Wisconsin and the Midwest.

We Receive a Disproportionate Share of Department of Defense Spending

- 3.4% of military personnel are located in the Midwest while 18.6% of the total population is in the region.
- In 2000, per capita federal defense spending in Wisconsin was \$230, 49th out of 50 states. The Department of Defense spending per capita for the United States in 2000 was \$789.

The Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region offer numerous advantages that make the region the best four season region in the United States to train and care for our Nation's defense personnel and their families. The following advantages are highlighted and expressed in greater detail in the plan:

- **Fort McCoy** serves as one of only 15 Power Projection Platforms in the Nation and is a Total Force War Fighting Center that trains military personnel from all branches of the armed services.
- **Volk Field** is the only Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center in the Nation, which allows around the clock training and is one of only four Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Centers nationwide.
- **Transportation Network** – Fort McCoy and Volk Field are served and connected to one another by the Class 1 freight line railway owned by Canadian Pacific Rail Systems Company. Interstates 90 and 94 provide highway access to the military bases. Barge service is available to the region by the Mississippi River which is directly connected to the bases by class 1 rail or Interstate highway. Numerous airports are located in the region with the La Crosse Municipal Airport providing commercial air service.
- **Regional Businesses** - The Agriculture and Food Processing; Machinery, Equipment and Metal Products; and Wood Processing industry clusters are the primary industry clusters that drive the region's economy. The industry clusters provide complimentary businesses, employment opportunities for spouses and contracting options to Fort McCoy and Volk Field.

- **Minimal Residential Encroachment** – Land use densities around Fort McCoy and Volk Field average approximately 7 homes and 17 residents per square mile. In addition, the State of Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law requires local governments to adopt comprehensive plans by the year 2010. This will assist in minimizing development impacting the military mission.
- **Support of a Mission Increase** – The Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region are capable and poised to support a Mission increase. The State of Wisconsin and the region has an abundant supply of groundwater for public use. Located below Wisconsin is a sandstone and dolomite aquifer with about two million billion gallons of groundwater. The region's wastewater treatment facilities are well maintained and are operating only at one half their capacity. Local communities have areas designated and infrastructure in place to accommodate future residential and business development.
- **Educational System** – The region's K-12 schools are part of Wisconsin's educational system that is regarded as one of the best in the Nation. The State of Wisconsin's students ACT scores ranked Number 1 in the Nation in 2003. The University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Wisconsin Technical College offer advanced educational instruction in the region. In addition, the institutions provide research and training opportunities to Fort McCoy and Volk Field.
- **Healthcare System** – The region has a much higher concentration of doctors and hospital beds than the state and the Nation as a whole. Gunderson Lutheran and Franciscan Skemp Mayo Health System provide the region with superior healthcare and state of the art facilities. The region's healthcare facilities except Tricare and active military insurance plans.
- **Energy Rates and Reliability** - Energy rates in the Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region are competitive and the utility service is reliable. Wisconsin electrical rates were lower than the average rate for the entire Nation in 2003.
- **Recreational Opportunities** - An abundance of recreation and leisure opportunities has made western Wisconsin a Midwest tourist destination. The region has over thirteen public golf courses to choose from. There are thousands of acres of state and county forests providing public hunting opportunities. Fisherman can enjoy lake, stream or river fishing in the Fort McCoy and Volk Field Region. The region offers some of the best bicycling opportunities in the Midwest with over 110 miles of uninterrupted bike trails traveling throughout the region.

The advantages detailed in part explain why the quality of life in the region is unsurpassed. The people of the region add to the explanation. The people of the Fort McCoy Region all have an excellent Midwestern work ethic and strong Midwestern family values. This is demonstrated by the region's low crime rate, low unemployment rate, and the residents commitment to establishing programs and services that will further enhance the region's ethnic and cultural diversity.

Putting aside the astounding quality of life, the endless water supply, the excellent transportation system, the low energy rates, the tremendous healthcare and educational systems in the region the most compelling fact is that there has been a mutual respect and admiration between the military bases and the local governments, businesses and residents of the region. The modern military is faced with land use conflicts, encroachment around military facilities, and neighbor complaints, but in over 95 years Fort McCoy and Volk Field have peacefully coexisted with their western Wisconsin neighbors. A statement to this cooperation and peaceful coexistence is that 35 local units of government have passed resolutions supporting the continued operation of Fort McCoy and Volk Field. It has never been so apparent that Fort McCoy and Volk Field mean a lot to western Wisconsin and the information presented demonstrates that western Wisconsin is vitally important to our Nation's defense.