

A'am al-Bina'a

“The year of 2008 will be a year of reconstruction for Iraq”
-- Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki



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Amara residents look forward to ‘a breath of fresh air’ as new incinerator nears completion

Maysan province will soon be handling its trash in a much more environmentally-friendly manner. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division is installing a modern waste incinerator, which is expected to be fully operational next month. It has the capacity to handle as much as 70 percent of the garbage being hauled to the landfill daily.

“Currently the landfill workers are openly burning the trash, often blanketing the area in a dense, black, unhealthy smoke,” said Iraqi Engineer Ali Abdul, who is overseeing the work.

The incinerator will be able to handle more than 400 pounds of solid waste or 50 liters of liquid waste per hour, he said, explaining that this is the best way of disposing of Amara’s industrial waste, as well as the bio-medical waste from the hospitals.

“City officials are anxious to see the incinerator up and running. It means families in the area will have much cleaner air to breath. Residents are very happy this project is nearly complete so the bad odors from the landfill will no longer be a problem,” continued Abdul, a lifelong Maysan province resident.

The nearly \$775,000 project includes a new all-weather asphalt access road, administration office building, a diesel generator, and a 2,000 liter diesel fuel storage facility. It’s also providing jobs for the local community, with 20 Iraqis on the construction crew.

“Our community is seeing other signs of progress here,” Abdul explained. The road between Amara and



The new incinerator at Amarah’s landfill (pictured here) should be fully operational in December.

Maymona is being expanded to a 4-lane highway. That \$6.2 million project is nearly complete.



Historically, Amara burns trash openly at its landfill, causing nearby neighborhoods to be blanketed by unhealthy, black smoke. Next month a modern incinerator will begin operating to address that problem.

Water treatment plant repairs, training offer long-term solution

An Iraqi crew's repairs to the water treatment plant in Musayyib will give clean water to 50,000 households.

"The facility is currently pumping water directly from the Euphrates River into the city's drinking water distribution system with little or no filtration," said Lt. Col. Michael Darrow with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The only treatment that is being provided is chlorination." Darrow said this type of treatment was insufficient for fully treating raw river water.

Nearly 35 Iraqi workers are on the crew rehabilitating the plant's major mechanical systems, with the goal of restoring its full design capacity of 2,160 cubic meters per hour. The \$1.6 million project is now 32 percent finished, Darrow said.

In addition to the construction effort, there is also a mission to ensure that the Iraqis are trained and ready to operate the plant on their own. The Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team and embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams are developing training programs to certify Iraqi operators. Once the plant repairs are complete next spring, the staff will be ready to produce clean water and will know the proper maintenance requirements



The Musayyib Water Treatment Plant in Babil Province will soon have a new look under a \$1.6 million repair project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

to avoid major breakdowns.

"We all recognize that operations and maintenance is one of Iraq's biggest challenges," said Maj. Kimberly Peoples, deputy team leader of the North Babil embedded PRT. "We are working hand-in-hand with the Babil water director general and the Babil PRT to identify a sustainable solution."

Peoples said this project is an important one. "It will ensure Musayyib families can count on clean water coming out of their taps for years to come," she said.

Micro-grants help economic growth, support citizens in New Baghdad

During the past year, Coalition forces have helped to stimulate the Iraqi economy through issuing micro-grants to local eastern Baghdad businesses.

As of Nov. 16, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry, 4th Bri-



An employee prepares food at a New Baghdad district restaurant in eastern Baghdad. Small-business owners received micro-grants to support their enterprises and economic stability.

gade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division alone has processed 20 applications and handed out nearly \$395,000 in the New Baghdad district, said 1st Lt. Grant White, a Co. C platoon leader. There are at least 25 more still going through the investigations process, he explained.

"With every micro-grant we are able to complete, you can see a difference," he said. "Shop owners walk a little taller in the street when they are able to support their families properly and supply their neighbors with merchandise.

"When the shop owners come to [Forward Operating Base] Loyalty to receive their cash after their applications are complete, they are a bit hesitant at first," White said. "Then once we explain what is happening and hand them the stack of hundred

dollar bills, they are breathless."

These small businesses include pharmacies, fruit stands, carpentry shops, fabrication shops, generator repair shops, sandwich shops, photography shops, medical clinics, bakeries, hardware and corner stores.

White said some of these shop owners have been able to hire additional workers who were previously unemployed, and buy more merchandise that was unavailable to meet public demand in the past.

"Being able to build a rapport with the local population is a valuable asset," White said. "The micro-grant process is working to discourage citizens from working for the enemy, showing them that there are alternative means of income other than helping those who are trying to harm them."

Refurbished Salman Pak school opens for students

Wurwood Kindergarten School officially reopened its doors Nov. 21 in the Rasheed neighborhood of Salman Pak after a two-month long refurbishing period.

The school has 350 students enrolled, aged four to five years old, and six classrooms. Before the refurbishment, the school could only hold 60 students. The school employs eight teachers, a director and an assistant.



Neighborhood children leave the Wurwood Kindergarten reopening ceremony Nov. 21 in Salman Pak, Iraq. The school completed a two-month refurbishment and reopened its doors for students.



A student at the Wurwood Kindergarten holds the tray with the scissors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the reopening in Salman Pak.

"The neighborhood families feel safe sending their kids to the school," said Nawad Abid Alaziz, the school's headmistress, adding that the refurbishment occurred in synch with the improved security in the area.

Soldiers of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, assisted the Iraqi Army, local shaykhs and contractors in achieving their success at the school, and attended the building dedication ceremony. The company commander, Capt. William Richardson, noted that the increased professionalism of the Iraqi Army has made the area more secure.

Alaziz said she was pleased with the \$80,000 refurbishment. The brightly painted school contrasts to what the building's condition was a short time ago. Much of the building had been hit by gunfire and was strewn with garbage.

The kindergarten project is a small part of a larger program in the neighborhood. The overall objective of the disarmament, disbandment, and reintegration program is to pump \$5.6 million in the area to stimulate the economy and provide employment and vocational skills for lasting employability.

The money will be spent on seven

construction projects, which will include two more kindergarten schools in the neighborhood, a land registration office, roads, a clinic, new fire trucks and new ambulances.

Mr. Razaaq, a Civil Service Corps contractor, whose students refurbished the school, also attended the opening.

"The program provides good paying jobs for the members of the community," said Razaaq.

"Before the program, there were no job opportunities in the area. It's good because it provides jobs and gives positive alternatives for the young," said Shaykh Hussein.



Iraqi Army Col. Muhammad Ali, 1st Battalion, 35th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, cuts a ribbon to open the Wurwood Kindergarten Nov. 21.



A group of Iraqi children line up to receive gifts during a children's fair Nov. 20 in northwest Baghdad's Salhiyah neighborhood. The event consisted of a live band, Iraqi actors, singers and comedians for more than 100 children and parents.



Local community conducts children's fair in Salhiyah



ABOVE: An Iraqi Police Officer hands out presents to a family during a children's fair Nov. 20 in the Salhiyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad.

LEFT: An Iraqi band entertains the crowd at a children's fair Nov. 20 in the Salhiyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad. The event also featured Iraqi actors, singers and comedians. "This was a great Iraqi - led event," said 1st Lt. Nicholas Anderson, a civil affairs officer with Multi-National Division - Baghdad. "It's always a pleasure to see the local community pull this type of event together."

Sustainers hold Iraqi women's business workshop

Nearly 40 local Iraqi business women gathered at Camp Mittica, Iraq, Nov. 17, as part of an Iraqi women's business workshop orchestrated by the 7th Sustainment Brigade.

"This was a combined effort with Muthanna and Dhi-Qar provincial reconstruction teams and the 7th Sustainment Brigade," said Maj. Shawn D. Sanborn, finance operations, 7th Sust. Bde. "We've been having these workshops with men so we knew it was important to get women involved."

Speakers for the workshop includ-

ed members of the 7th Sust. Bde., the Small Business Development Center for Nasiriyah and one of the Iraqi business women who attended the workshop.

The speakers covered topics on business including the Iraqi Based Industrial Zone, micro grants, loans and how to create a business plan.

"It was a very good class with useful material," said Batel Abuol Almer, chief engineer, attendee and speaker.

"Today's workshop really uncovered a lot of information and showed me how much interest they [Iraqi

business women] have," said Alison Kosnett, governance specialist, Provincial Reconstruction Team Muthanna. "It showed us that they're serious and energetic and that there is entrepreneurial energy."

There was a feeling of unity and progress that that fueled the workshop's success.

"The meeting went so well because everyone gave their opinion and participated," said Nabeel Alsaffy, executive director of the Small Business Development Center of Nasiriyah. "The women want another workshop."