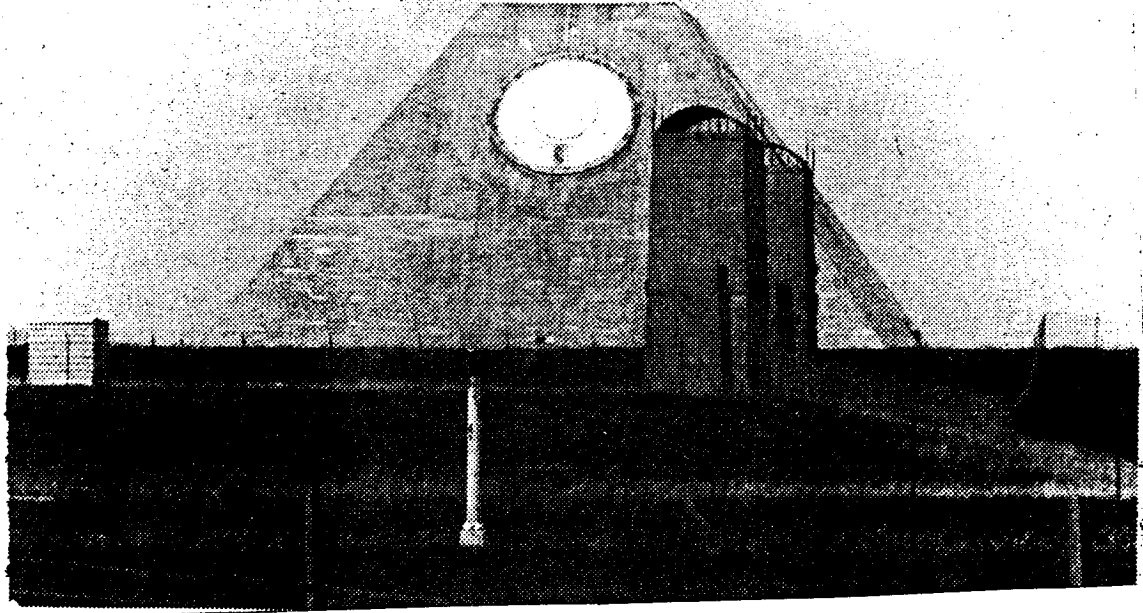


Nekoma Back In News



The Missile Site Radar Station (MSR), which was constructed in the very early 1970s to accompany the Perimeter Acquisition Radar (PAR), has been a big topic of conversation lately.

The PAR, which has been under operation by the US Air Force, has also been reviewed quite a bit recently. There are currently over 25 military people and several Department of Defense civilians employed at which is now titled the Cavalier Air Force Station (CAFS).

According to the Bismarck Tribune, a four-inch thick document released by the United States Army during the weekend of Nov. 20-21 appears to be the signal that the old Nekoma missile base will become the first stage of a new missile defense system.

According to Robert Elsas, a Small Business Administration procurement analyst in Bismarck, it looks like it's going to happen.

The document outlines the ground-based interceptor to be built at Nekoma for a national missile defense program. It also contains the specifics necessary for defense contractors to submit bids for the project.

From an office at North Dakota's Economic Development and Finance Department, Elsas has been working to help North Dakota businesses qualify as subcontractors.

The latest Government Accounting Office estimate, reported in Defense Weekly places the price of the interceptor system at \$36 billion.

Mick Bohn, EDF director, said he was told by a Strategic Defense Initiative Organization official that North Dakota can expect to cash in on 5 percent of the total project cost.

Elsas said the ground-based portion of the Pentagon's Strategic Defense Initiative program will not begin major construction efforts for more than a year, but defense industry contractors are actively searching for small businesses in the region to provide local support for their contracts.

For the past six months, Elsas and Bohn have been urging North Dakota businesses to prepare "capability profiles" to submit to the defense contractors. Between now and Feb. 18, prime defense contractors must submit their proposals and have identified the subcontractors they intend to use.

From port-a-potties to fencing and food service, Elsas has lists of hundreds of goods and services the defense contractors will need. Copies of the proposal and step-by-step help for small businesses is available at EDF offices in Bismarck or by calling Elsas at 221-5334.

The actual deployment date for the ground-based interceptor system is classified, although the proposal document gives the late 1990s to early 2000s as a time frame.

Elsas says that some components of the system already exist and have been tested. That includes the Lockheed Corp., which has an interceptor head for a missile. Company representatives showed videos of the equipment at an October trade show in Bismarck.

According to Elsas the project has a DX rating, which is the highest national priority.

Initial project bids are to be awarded in April. Elsas said funds are not available for the entire system, but will be released by Congress incrementally, beginning next spring.

Although Nekoma is not specifically mentioned in the documents, Elsas has read through, the interceptor site is listed as "in accordance" with the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty. Only one US site is listed in the treaty, and that is Nekoma.