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## Grant aids outreach for spouses

### Counties helping military families find work in area

By Maggie Carlson / *The Telegraph*

Madison and St. Clair counties are helping find employment for spouses of military and civilian workers who might move to Scott Air Force Base following base closures on the East Coast.

A \$135,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor is helping the counties reach out and familiarize the families with the counties and their housing and job opportunities.

"It's a grant to help the spouses find work," said David Stoecklin, executive director of Madison County Employment and Training Department.

Last week, representatives from both counties traveled to Virginia to meet with spouses and families to tell them about the area and answer questions, Stoecklin told the Madison County Board Grants Committee Monday.

Grant money will also be used for a virtual interview program, where employers and job seekers in Virginia can meet and interview virtually, Stoecklin said.

At least 800 jobs are being added to Scott Air Force Base during the next three years after it was announced last year that 33 large military bases and 150 smaller facilities in the country would be closed to save money and to better suit defense needs.

The plan calls for a massive shift of U.S. forces that would result in a net loss of 29,005 military and civilian jobs at domestic installations and a saving of \$38.8 billion.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission proposed these closures after studying what affect the closures would have.

Being added at Scott Air Force base are 12 new KC-135R aircraft and the Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command and Logistics Support Center, which will draw on five major command regional supply squads that are being realigned.

The 800 jobs are through the Department of Defense and through companies contracted by the department.

Stoecklin said some of the military and civilian employees will have to make their decision to relocate as soon as within the next month. Local residents would fill the jobs left open by those who choose not to relocate.

"That's what we hope for," Stoecklin said.

Scott base officials were not available Monday to talk about the progress on relocations.