



For Immediate Release  
September 16, 2008  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## *Votech grads part of crew renovating, expanding facility*

By Alicia Embrey  
Gulf Region South District



**ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq** – Iraqi workers, who are helping expand the job-training opportunities at a votech school in Babil Province, have a personal interest in ensuring the renovation is done right.

“Many of the carpenters, electricians and masons on that construction crew attended classes at Iskandariyah Vocational Technical School and know the value of its curriculum,” said Iraqi engineer Ali Edreise with the Gulf Region Division. The \$4.5 million project involves renovating seven school dormitories that will house up to 1400 students, as well as classrooms and the auditorium.

“After Iraq’s liberation in 2003, the school was ransacked and looted,” ex-

plained Edreise. “The furniture, doors and windows were stolen and the rooms had no water, electricity, or working restrooms. The renovations will allow students from outside the area to attend classes and learn new skills.”

Edreise pointed out this is the third phase of improvements at that facility. “In 2007, we oversaw a \$600,000 electrical upgrade so the automotive and machinery shops were functioning, as well as a complete new outfitting of the school’s food preparation and dining facility. Earlier this year, new concrete flooring was installed in the grinding workshop, milling workshop, tools workshop and turning workshop, along with new electrical connec-



Many of the electricians, carpenters and masons working to renovate the Iskandariyah Vocational Technical School in Babil Province south of Baghdad are graduates of that facility and know first hand the value of the job-training skills being taught there. They plan to finish the work in December, four months ahead of schedule, and those renovations will allow the school to expand its enrollment from 1,250 students to 4,000 students annually. (USACE photo by Alicia Embrey)

tions and exhaust fans there under a \$77,000 project," he continued.

"Prior to 2007, Iskandariyah Votech was able to offer only one course with about 30 students in attendance," Edreise said. "Today, the curriculum includes 18 classes with over 1,250 students enrolled. When the final phase is completed in December, the votech will be able to house and educate over 4,000 students each year."

The curriculum includes classes in computer operations and maintenance, sewing, hair care, welding, auto mechanics and body work, electrician fundamentals and carpentry.

The project is located in Babil Province, about 50 kilometers south of Baghdad.

More than 638 infrastructure projects valued at \$700 million have been completed in Babil, Karbala, Wasit, al Qadisiyah, and an Najaf over the past year. These include roads, schools, water treatment facilities, electrical distribution improvements, and primary health care clinics.

**Note:** Alicia Embrey is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact public affairs by phone at 540 665-1233, by e-mail to [CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil), or visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).