

## NEWS BREAKS

**F-22 whistleblower suit goes to federal court**

A whistleblower suit claiming Lockheed Martin knowingly used defective stealth coatings when building F-22 Raptors has been transferred to federal court.

The suit was originally filed in October 2007. Darrol Olsen, a stealth engineer who was fired by Lockheed in 1999, claims Lockheed falsely certified the coatings between September 1995 and June 1999, saying they had passed stealth tests.

**Senator threatens holds on Obama nominees**

Sen. Charles Grassley may start placing holds on President Barack Obama's nominees if the Justice Department doesn't respond to his questions.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is waiting on Justice to respond to dozens of requests, Grassley said, including 24 questions Grassley asked Attorney General Eric Holder in June regarding the termination of AmeriCorps Inspector General Gerald Walpin.

Grassley, R-Iowa, a committee member, said he is concerned that Walpin may have been wrongfully terminated after being accused by administration officials of withholding evidence and making improper statements to the media. The Obama administration argues that Walpin's dismissal earlier this year was justified.

Grassley said he is dismayed that Holder's office only sends him publicly released information instead of directly answering his questions. Should Holder not answer his questions directly and succinctly, Grassley said he will place holds on Obama's nominees to get the president's attention.

**Background check of alleged shooter probed**

President Barack Obama last week ordered a high-level review of how a terrorism task force handled intelligence collected on Army Maj. Nidal Hasan as recently as last spring — just months before the psychiatrist's alleged killing spree at Fort Hood in Texas.

Obama disclosed the review after the FBI and a Pentagon official acknowledged that the task force had not shared what it learned with the Army.

The task force discovered 10 to 20 e-mails Hasan had exchanged with Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical Muslim cleric who had preached at a Washington-area mosque but now lives in Yemen, according to a federal law enforcement official. The task force concluded the e-mails were consistent with research Hasan was conducting and did not warrant further investigation, the FBI said in a statement. The statement said the FBI did not inform anyone outside the task force about the e-mails.

Defense Department representatives are assigned to the task force but did not share what they learned with their Pentagon bosses, the law enforcement official said. The law enforcement and Defense officials, who have been briefed on the investigation into the Fort Hood shooting, did not want to be identified because they are not authorized to discuss the probe publicly.

Hasan, 39, was charged in a military court Nov. 12 with 13 counts of premeditated murder stemming from the Nov. 5 shooting that also wounded 33 others, said Chris Grey, a spokesman for the Army criminal investigation division.

If convicted, Hasan could receive the death penalty.

Obama said in a statement that John Brennan, a former CIA official and former director of the National Counterterrorism Center, would review intelligence on Hasan gathered prior to the shooting. Preliminary results are due Nov. 30.

# Sun to help power 900 homes at Air Force base

By ERIK HOLMES

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The largest solar neighborhood in the continental U.S. will be on an Air Force base in Arizona's Sonora Desert, where the sun shines 350 days a year.

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base outside Tucson is putting the finishing touches on its record-setting "green" privatized housing development called Soaring Heights Communities, according to Col. Charles Hunter, commander of the base's 355th Mission Support Group, which oversees the project.

The installation of 81,000 solar panels — 45,000 on the ground and 36,000 on some 900 rooftops — should be wrapped up by early December. Work started in October.

The panels will generate about 6 megawatts of electricity, enough to supply about 75 percent of the community's power needs. The savings will translate into lower utility bills for airmen and more energy for Air Force missions, and will press home the Air Force's intention to be a good neighbor to Tucson, Hunter said.

Soaring Heights Communities is a



SOLAR CITY

**The solar project at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base will be the largest in the U.S., powering 900 homes at the base.**

partnership of Tennessee-based Actus Lend Lease, which develops and manages privatized housing for the military; SolarCity, a California-based solar power company; Tucson Electric Power, a local utility; and National Bank of Arizona, which financed the project and will own more than half of the system.

Most of the 900 homes are new, designed to be up to 30 percent more energy efficient than a standard home, making them particularly suited to solar power, according to Actus Lend Lease.

The project is expected to increase Arizona's supply of solar power by 15 percent, according to SolarCity information.

While the neighborhood is the largest to date of Davis-Monthan's green initiatives, it is far from the only one.

The biggest will be a 24-megawatt solar array project that will provide nearly 100 percent of the electricity used by the mission-centered side of the base. Base engineers are preparing to solicit bids for the project, now in the planning stages.

Among the smaller solar projects are a water-heating system for the outdoor swimming pool, crosswalk signals at road intersections and water preheaters on three dormitories, which the base estimates will save \$24,000 a year.

Davis-Monthan is also being aggressive about water conservation. The base recently completed a survey of how it can reduce water demand for landscaping, and several projects are in the works to install drought-tolerant native plants and more efficient drip irrigation systems. Hunter expects the measures to save the base 680,000 gallons of water annually. ■

**Air Force facility to aid fuel research**

A new \$2.5 million facility at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, will allow the Air Force to research the production of alternative fuels for military aircraft.

Construction was to start this week on the Assured Aerospace Fuels Research Facility, to be completed by fall 2010. The facility will be able to produce 15 to 25 gallons a day of research jet fuels derived from coal or biomass materials, reducing Air Force dependence on industry to supply fuel, an official said Nov. 10.

**EPA to employees: Take down YouTube video**

The Environmental Protection Agency ordered two of its attorneys to remove a video they posted on YouTube that criticizes cap-and-trade legislation, an action that calls into question the Obama administration's promises to run a transparent government.

The video, entitled "The Huge Mistake," was produced by Laurie Williams and Allan Zabel, a married

couple who are both EPA lawyers. EPA initially gave clearance for posting the video in September, but reversed its decision Nov. 5 after the couple wrote a similarly themed op-ed piece in *The Washington Post*, said Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

EPA threatened the couple with disciplinary action if the video was not removed by Nov. 6. EPA also said future outside writings must be approved by the agency before they are published.

"EPA is abusing ethics rules to gag two conscientious employees who have every right to speak out as citizens," said Ruch, who reposted the video on behalf of the employees.

The couple identified themselves in the video as EPA attorneys, but said their comments were not intended to represent the views of EPA or the Obama administration.

**More biobased products identified for procurement**

A thousand new biodegradable products were added to the list of preferred products by

government purchasing officials.

The products, which are certified by the Agriculture Department as part of the government's BioPreferred Program, fall into nine new categories of products: chain and cable lubricants, corrosion preventatives, food cleaners, forming lubricants, gear lubricants, general purpose household cleaners, industrial cleaners, multipurpose cleaners and parts wash solutions.

This represents a 20 percent increase in products in the BioPreferred Program.

Purchasing officials are required to give preference to biobased products if they are available in a reasonable amount of time, meet performance needs and come at a reasonable price. A complete list of products and categories is available at [www.biopreferred.gov](http://www.biopreferred.gov).

**10,000 transportation projects win stimulus funds**

More than 10,000 transportation projects funded by the Recovery Act have been approved, Vice President Joe Biden and Transportation Secretary Ray

LaHood said last week.

The Transportation Department has made \$48.1 billion available for highway, road, transit, bridge and airport construction and repairs. Of that, \$30.6 billion has been obligated to fund 10,041 approved projects, with 6,547 transportation projects underway.

Among the projects:

■ The Federal Aviation Administration has awarded 99 percent of its funding, \$1.2 billion, for 355 airport improvement projects.

■ The Federal Highway Administration has approved \$20.2 billion for more than 8,500 road, bridge and highway projects.

■ The Federal Transit Administration has awarded \$7.4 billion to state and local transit agencies for new vehicles, facility renovations and maintenance.

■ The Federal Railroad Administration has approved 93 percent of funding available under the Amtrak Capital Grants program.

■ The Maritime Administration has spent all of its \$96 million for capital improvements to small shipyards.