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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Release Number: 78-2012
May 24, 2012



Ceremonies for Fitness Center, NGIS slated for June 7

By Fifi Kieschnick, NAS Kingsville Public Affairs

NAS Kingsville will be holding ribbon-cutting ceremonies the first week of June for two long-awaited projects.

"We are completing two long overdue quality-of-life projects for NAS Kingsville personnel," said Kevin Wong, director of program management and engineering, whose section oversaw the contracts.

The Fitness Center, which partially opened May 5, and the Navy Gateway Inns and Suites, which will open June 1, are the two projects that Mr. Wong is referring to.

A ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony for NAS Kingsville's state-of-the-art Fitness Center will be held Thursday, June 7, at 11 a.m.



"The facility is fantastic," said Capt. Mark McLaughlin, NAS Kingsville commanding officer. "There are still some minor punch-list items to complete, but there's plenty of equipment for personnel to take advantage of."

Indoors, the 28,000 square-foot facility includes a basketball court, volleyball court, free-weight area, group exercise rooms and racquetball courts. Outdoor features include a 25-meter/6-lane swimming pool with zero-depth entry, 6-lane 400-meter track, synthetic turf football field and jogging trail.

The \$12.7 million project was awarded in March 2010 and began with a ground-breaking ceremony in August 2010. The Ross Group is the design-build contractor. Leo

A. Daly is the architect-engineer firm. The cost of the project includes all office and fitness equipment.

"The Fitness Center is still on track to be completed by mid-June," Wong added. "The weather is the deciding factor for laying the rubberized track and completing the work."

The fitness complex will be dedicated to Petty Officer 3rd Class Ronchester Santiago of Kingsville, who was one of 17 Sailors killed aboard USS Cole when the ship was bombed while in port in Yemen on Oct. 12, 2000. Santiago graduated from H.M. King High School in 1996 and his first duty assignment was aboard USS Constitution, the historic, post-Revolutionary Warship anchored in Boston. Santiago later transferred to USS Cole, which was the victim of a terrorist attack while refueling in Aden Harbor, Yemen. Santiago was 22 when he was killed. The explosion killed 17 Sailors and injured 39 others.

Gil Roque, manager of Combined Bachelors Quarters, is planning a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the NGIS on June 7, at 12 noon.

"We plan to open June 1," Roque said, "and have a ceremony the following week."

The former facility closed April 17, and since then, he and his staff have been working hard disposing of the old property and equipping the new facility.

"We disposed of 3,000 pieces of furniture through Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office," he said, "and we are moving in and putting together more than \$1.5 million worth of furniture into the new facility."

The NGIS project was awarded in September 2010 to TJC Engineering Inc., of Louisville, Ky. The \$14 million contract included refurbishment of the Bachelors' Quarters as well as the NGIS.

