

## Kingsley Field future topic of study

By HOLLY DILLEMUTH H&N Staff Reporter 14 hrs ago



H&N photo by Holly Dillemath

Klamath Falls area resident Todd Andres on Monday night places a sticker next to a priority for Kingsley Field expressed long-term goals for the base.

Ensuring that Kingsley Air Field continues to operate well in the future was a key goal of a study group that met Monday night.

The Klamath Falls air base is home to the 173rd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard and trains fighter pilots in the Guard and regular Air Force.

Celeste Boccieri-Werner and Mike Hrapla, both vice presidents of Matrix Design Group — a Phoenix, Ariz., company facilitating the Monday discussion — emphasized the focus of the study is to find a broad range of solutions to challenges facing Kingsley Field.

The study is community-driven, Boccieri-Werner said, not spurred by a federal agency.

“It’s really a collaborative effort to preserve the military mission today and in the future,” Boccieri-Werner said. “At the same time, make sure that the community has an opportunity for economic development and for the quality of life so it can continue to grow, too.”

The meeting at the Klamath Falls Police Department drew more than a dozen interested in taking inventory and prioritizing needs at Kingsley Field. The gathering is the second in a series planned to identify the public’s long-term priorities for the base.

“It’s one of the largest economic engines within your region,” Boccieri-Werner said, adding that the base provides more than \$114 million to the state of Oregon’s economy.

Matrix Design Group will provide a set of recommendations, in conjunction with local leaders, on how to preserve the mission at Kingsley Field. The study is about 40 percent complete, Boccieri said, and a draft of the report is expected by next summer 2016.

Boccieri-Werner said the priority rankings of issues would help Matrix Design Group and community leaders figure out a time frame for implementing recommendations for the base.

“We’re going to create a playbook for the communities on how deal with these different issues and that doesn’t necessarily mean you’re going to use every play in playbook,” Hrapla said.

The study looks at factors affecting the base, such as air quality, safety zones, vertical obstructions such as cell towers, and water quality.

Recommendations could mean the base needs to make adjustments in areas such as zoning, building codes, and land use and development controls according to the study's website. Go online to [www.kingsleyjlus.com](http://www.kingsleyjlus.com) (<http://www.kingsleyjlus.com>) to learn more.

### **Meeting draws discussion**

During a question and answer session, Klamath Falls area resident Todd Andres shared his perspective on the base.

"In a perfect world, all these issues would need to be addressed to secure the air base," Andres said. "But we're not in a perfect world."

Andres said while one issue may be seen as more important than another, "it's more important that the base stays here."

Hrapla recommended looking for solutions to all potential issues facing the base equally instead of narrowing a focus only on the possibility of a base closure

Tim Bruner, who serves as civil engineer at the base, also shared his perspective.

"We want to try to protect what we have, but we don't want to hold onto that so much that we limit the growth of the community," Bruner said. "I think it's a balance."

Bocchieri-Werner emphasized the study is a collaborative effort to bring together stakeholders from a variety of sectors, but is not a regulatory document.

"If everybody has information, you can at least make informed decisions," she said.

"There may be some areas that we do provide and recommend some new strategies and then ultimately, we will develop the strategies and (they) will go to the final report."

Matrix Design Group contracted with the city to conduct the 14-month study, which is funded by a \$200,000 Department of Defense grant as well as an in-kind match of funds by the city of Klamath Falls.

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