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## Brewer firms lands \$13.2 million contract for Maine Army National Guard regional training facility

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BDN Staff

BREWER, Maine — Nickerson & O'Day Inc. of Brewer has been awarded a \$13.2 million contract for the second phase of the Maine Army National Guard's Regional Training Institute at the Bangor Armed Forces Reserve Center.

The news came as the company nears completion of the first phase of the project, more than two months ahead of schedule, Karl Ward, company president and CEO, said Wednesday evening in a telephone interview.

"The great thing about this procurement process is that it's not just low bid. It's also based on the quality of the construction manager submitting the bid," he said. "By all accounts, the Guard has been very, very pleased with the work that we've done, and that's been very gratifying for us."

Ward said that the first phase of the project, which also had a \$13 million price tag, involves construction of the actual training facility, which includes administrative offices, a material handling area, and state-of-the-art classroom and instructional space.

"It's been a very challenging project," he said of the facility being built along Hildreth Street.

"The interesting thing about the site is that we had to blast and remove ledge immediately adjacent to a very sensitive radar dish," which he said Bangor International Airport and perhaps other agencies use to track flights.

The second phase will involve building dormitory and cafeteria facilities as well as athletic and training facilities.

"That work will probably last 18 to 20 months, with completion during the first half of 2012," Ward said. "We'll be employing 50 to 100 quality Maine workers and tradesmen at any given time, once we get the roof on."

Ward said the second phase likely will begin in October, even before the first phase is completed.

The \$13,210,052 contract award by the U.S. Army was announced Wednesday by U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, who is a member of the Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees.

Collins helped secure the funding, which was included in the fiscal year 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

"This contract will allow the Maine Army National Guard to finish construction of the Regional Training Institute in Bangor, while supporting local construction jobs," Collins said in a news release.

“I am pleased to have helped secure funding for both phases of construction of this training facility, which will support the men and women of the 240th Regiment and the Maine Army National Guard,” she said.

After watching local projects — including the Margaret Chase Smith Federal Building overhaul in Bangor and the new Hampden Academy building — be awarded to companies based outside the state, Ward said, Wednesday’s announcement was welcome news for Maine’s struggling economy and its work force.

Due to federal guidelines, he said, Nickerson & O’Day was not eligible to bid on the two Bangor projects. It lost the Hampden contract to the low bidder in a battle he called “fair and square.”

“We try on every project to use an all-Maine team. We believe in Maine and we believe in Mainers,” he said. “We know we can measure up.”

Based on a rule of thumb that says each \$1 spent has a multiplier effect of \$7 in terms of economic activity, Ward calculated the total impact of both phases of the Army Guard project at nearly \$100 million.