



November 6, 2025

Université des Acadiens

Dear Oaklawn neighbors:

We understand you may have questions about the new Louisiana National Guard Readiness Center being built in University Research Park and, as your neighbor, we are eager to share details about the project and how it fits into the University's plans for the area, as well as our academic and research mission.

We recognize this information is coming after construction has begun, and we are committed to being more proactive in our communication going forward.

The University and the Louisiana National Guard 256th Brigade have a long history of partnership that supports education, research and public service. This new facility strengthens that relationship and greatly expands opportunities for collaboration in areas such as emergency management and cybersecurity.

We hope the following information answers your concerns and explains the opportunities this strategic, strengthened partnership between UL Lafayette and the Guard will provide. Please note that this letter offers information from the University's perspective. The Louisiana National Guard will issue its own communication addressing matters related to its mission, activities, and other topics best explained by its leadership. If you have other concerns, I invite you to contact Eric Maron, the University's senior communications representative, at communications@louisiana.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaimie Hebert".

Jaimie Hebert
Interim President

Enclosure

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Louisiana National Guard Readiness Center?

Per information shared by the Guard, it is an administrative and coordination facility — not what most of us think of as a training site. Think of it more as an administrative office building, with meeting rooms, classrooms, a gym and support spaces for the Louisiana National Guard to replace the main building at the current Surrey Street location. Other components, such as maintenance and warehousing for vehicles and other equipment, will remain at the Surrey Street facility.

2. What types of vehicles or equipment will be kept there?

The Guard will store only light vehicles — such as Humvees and high-water rescue vehicles — used for disaster response and community support. According to the Guard, no tanks, helicopters, artillery or heavy military equipment will be stored or operated at the site.

3. How is this part of the vision for University Research Park?

Locating the facility in University Research Park strengthens the partnership between the Guard and UL Lafayette in research areas such as cyber-physical systems, AI, cybersecurity, emergency management and defense-related research; each are among growth areas for the University and major components of past and potential collaborations with the Guard. Over the past several years, research centers and academic programs at UL Lafayette have collaborated with the Guard on disaster preparedness and management with the Regional Application Center; supported the state's emergency operations through NIMSAT and the Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center; and fostered cybersecurity partnerships through the Center for Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity.

This partnership also aligns with the University's master plan for growth and its mission to create research partnerships that benefit Louisiana's people and economy.

4. How does the University benefit from this project?

The Readiness Center leverages UL Lafayette's partnerships in research, public service and workforce development. It also expands opportunities for faculty and students to collaborate with the Guard on projects that enhance Louisiana's emergency response, intelligence and security infrastructure. What's more, housing this facility on University property opens the door to potential federal dollars in related research areas we currently do not qualify to receive, and that greatly increases our potential for investment. The Guard facility under construction will include a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) that will enhance the University's ability to secure federal contracts related to cybersecurity and other defense related applications, leveraging the expertise of researchers in our nationally recognized computer science and engineering programs.

5. How does the building fit the look and design of the area?

Research Park has a covenant to which all construction and tenants must adhere; therefore the facility's architecture follows UL Lafayette's design standards, with requirements for

setbacks, lighting, landscaping and buffers. Its red brick exterior and landscaping will match nearby University buildings to ensure visual and physical consistency throughout University Research Park.

6. How does this affect the potential of economic development along Congress Street?

While the entrance to the new facility fronts Congress Street with a new boulevard for access, the actual center will be set back behind 2 acres of developable property in prime location on this commercial corridor. Guard personnel working in the facility – along with the growing workforce at nearby CGI – will help accelerate economic development opportunities along Congress Street.

7. Will this increase traffic or noise in the neighborhood?

Construction activity will occur during standard hours, and contractors are working to minimize noise and dust. Once completed, daily traffic will largely be limited to normal commuter patterns that are comparable to other office buildings and research facilities located in Research Park. Activity will increase when Guard personnel are on-site for drill weekends. The drills expected at this location are table-top planning exercises held indoors.

8. How long will construction take?

Construction is expected to take about 20 months. The University and the Guard will keep the community informed as milestones are reached and the project nears completion.

9. How can neighbors share feedback or get more information?

Residents are encouraged to email communications@louisiana.edu with questions or concerns. The University is committed to maintaining open communication with our neighbors throughout the construction process and beyond.