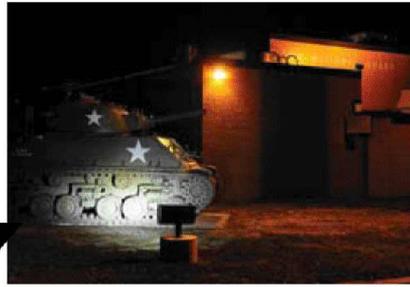


A NEW OUTLOOK



A newly-painted Sherman tank sits outside the Iowa Falls armory, which hosted an open house last Friday.



Members of Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry participate in a ceremony at the National Guard armory in Iowa Falls. The armory recently underwent \$2.3 million in renovations.

PHOTOS BY ELI HAMANN / TIMES CITIZEN

Guard unveils \$2.3M armory renovations

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It might not look like much has changed at the Iowa National Guard armory on the west edge of Iowa Falls, but take a tour and it's clear the building is like new. And it should be. The government recently invested \$2.3 million to renovate the 35-year-old facility, which is home to Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry.

The renovations were unveiled to the public at a rededication ceremony Friday evening, where activities kicked off with speeches from Iowa Congressman Tom Latham and Brig. Gen. Janet Phipps, who is a commander with the Iowa National Guard.

Maj. Brian Brecht, who is part of a team of Guard employees who oversee maintenance of the facilities across the state, said the project in Iowa Falls was the 28th armory of the Iowa National Guard's 43 to get an upgrade.

"Our facilities need to be up to the same standards as local high schools and community colleges," Brecht told an audience of more than 50 people. "This armory was built in 1976 and was 15,900 square feet. This project renovated all of that and added 4,800 square feet."

The cost of the project — \$2.3 million —

NEW ARMORY A2



Spc. Matt Urhammer demonstrates the capabilities of some of the National Guard's weaponry during an open house at the armory Friday evening.



...NEW ARMORY

was paid using state and federal funds.

Latham, who helped secure the funds for the project, thanked the soldiers for their sacrifices.

"It's the appropriate and right thing to do to have the best facility possible to support you," Latham said. "I want to say thank you to you for your service to our country."

Perhaps the people who will most appreciate the changes made at the local armory are the soldiers who work there every day. Sgt. 1st Class Adam Akers said the difference between the way the armory was before the renovation and the way it is now is "much nicer."

"The finished product is great," said Akers. "It's easier and more efficient to work out of. There's more storage space for equipment."

In addition to new heat-



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U.S. Rep. Tom Latham (center) and Brig. Gen. Janet Phipps (holding scissors) cut a ribbon to officially reopen the renovated Iowa Falls armory.

ing, air conditioning, ventilation and fixtures, the armory has a new, fully-equipped kitchen, exercise

facilities, improved and expanded storage space, new classrooms and offices and a family services

room.

Akers said the facility is reopened for rentals, which can include every-



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Staff Sgt. Roland Noel talks with Jon Larson, of Iowa Falls, about some of the weaponry used by the Iowa National Guard.

thing from family reunions to wedding receptions. The classrooms, including an ICN classroom, are also available for rental.

The theme of the evening was thanks to the soldiers who serve. Prior to cutting the ceremonial

ribbon, Phipps recognized the soldiers for being part of the "1 percent."

"What you have done is remarkable," she said. "You are the 1 percent who stepped forward and put on the uniform. Don't ever forget it. We won't." ■