

## Fort Detrick dedicates new central utility plant

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By [Justin M. Palk](#)  
News-Post Staff

FORT DETRICK -- The post marked the completion of its new Central Utility Plant on Thursday, which Maj. Gen. George Weightman called a major milestone on the path to bringing the National Interagency Biodefense Campus on line.

Chevron Energy Solutions and Keenan Development finished the \$100 million plant on budget and on time, Mike Penland, a Keenan principal, said at the plant's dedication ceremony.

"(This is) the most reliable and the most secure central utility plant in the entire Department of Defense system," Penland said.

The NIBC, under construction now and scheduled to be completed by 2012, includes biodefense research facilities operated by the U.S. Army, Department of Homeland Security and National Institutes of Health.

The new plant, which came on line April 1, will provide steam and chilled water to the NIBC, as well as acting as a sort of surge protector for the campus, evening out the flow of electricity from the grid so power fluctuations don't damage sensitive equipment.

It's also capable of providing backup power for the campus for up to 72 hours.

The plant was built over 18 months, and workers laid 22 miles of underground electrical conduit and wiring, and four miles of pipe for steam and chilled water distribution, said Jim Davis, Chevron Energy Solutions president.

This is a first-of-its-kind plant, built under an enhanced use lease, a kind of private-public partnership that allowed the project to proceed outside the normal Defense Department procurement process, he said.

Under the terms of the partnership, Chevron will operate the plant, while Keenan Development will own the plant and lease the land it sits on from Fort Detrick, according to a statement from the two companies.

Chevron is pursuing similar plants elsewhere, using this one as an example, Davis said.

The plant, Weightman said, is also designed so it can expand to meet future needs if necessary.



Photo by Doug Koontz

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Fort Detrick unveiled its new utility plant Thursday. The facility is a joint venture between Chevron and Detrick that provides the base with surge protection and backup power production.