

NEWS RELEASE
Defense Commissary Agency
Eastern Region



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New commissary groundbreaking scheduled

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE COMMISSARY, S.C. -- Commissary shoppers here will see their surcharge dollars in action as a groundbreaking ceremony for a new \$11.5 million facility takes place Dec. 11 at 10 a.m.

The ceremony will take place near the parking area next to the Base Exchange and Shoppette. Scheduled participants include: Brig. Gen. Gerald A. Black, commander, 315th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command; Col. Karl B. Young, deputy wing commander, 437th Airlift Wing; Jimmie D. Estes, Zone Manager, Zone 29, Defense Commissary Agency; and Eddie W. Williams, store director. Interested patrons are welcome to observe.

“This facility is a result of the 5 percent surcharge you pay each time you shop DeCA commissaries anywhere in the world,” said Estes. “Your surcharge dollars work to renovate and build new commissaries, so this is truly your store.”

The new commissary sales floor will be more than one and a half times larger, with 40,000 square feet compared to the current 26,312 square feet. The phased project begins with warehouse construction in the parking lot next to the Base Exchange and Shopette. After that, the old warehouse will be demolished and the new store sales area construction will begin in that location. Finally, when the new facility has opened, the old store will be torn down to make way for additional parking. The new entrance will face Dorchester Road.

The project was awarded Sept. 25 to Medlin Construction, San Antonio, and is scheduled to be complete around February 2003.

News media wishing to cover the groundbreaking ceremony, should call the Charleston AFB Public Affairs Office at (843) 963-5537 or 5589 to be escorted onto the installation. Interviews will be available with DeCA commissary officials.

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The Defense Commissary Agency's vision statement is: "The Commissary Benefit - Cornerstone of Military Quality of Life. It is our goal to deliver the premier quality of life benefit for our military efficiently and effectively." With headquarters at Fort Lee, Va., the agency operates a worldwide chain of 281 commissaries to provide groceries to military members, retirees and their families. Commissary patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5 percent surcharge, which covers the construction of new commissaries and the modernization of existing stores. Patrons save an average of 30.4 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices. These savings, worth \$2,400 a year for a family of four, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families. A valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries help the United States recruit and keep the best and the brightest men and women in the service of their country.