



Gulf Region District



NEWS RELEASE



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USACE gets Al Mamoon Telecom project back in business

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The artist's rendition of the completed Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications Center.

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Telephone communications is a given in the United States. Americans can call anyone in the world from their home phones. In sharp contrast, residents in many areas of Baghdad can't even make calls beyond their own neighborhood. Telecommunications in Iraq is now on track to take a giant leap forward following the rebirth of a major construction project first started in 2005.

Construction is now back in full swing at the \$23.4 million Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications Center in the Karh section of western Baghdad. The site is at the foot of the highly recognizable Al Mamoon Tower. The worksite had been idle since November of 2008 when the previous contractor demobilized the site with nearly 60 percent of the work completed on the four-element complex.



The Al Mamoon tower overshadows the construction site of the Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications Center. The project, recently re-awarded by USACE to complete construction, calls for building a seven-story office building on the site. (GRD photo by Mike Scheck)

Al Mamoon's seven-story office building will serve as a telecommunications hub for the Iraqi Ministry of Communications and is designed to house state-of-the-art equipment to improve radio transmissions, cellular, land-line telephone communications and high-speed internet service for the Baghdad area. The building will also have commercial office spaces, administrative offices, conference rooms, a 200-seat auditorium and a cafeteria. The new post office will have more than 1,300-square-meters of floor space including a loading dock. Two major package delivery companies will also have offices in the post office.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers re-awarded the contract to complete the seven-story main office building, post office, 250 space car-park and central plaza to the Iraqi owned Kufan Group in July 2009. The USACE Gulf Region District's International Zone (IZ) Resident Office is serving as the management partner for the project, scheduled to be completed in late 2010. The project is funded through the U.S. State Department's Iraqi Reconstruction Relief Fund.

What's unique to the Al Mamoon project is the use of post tensioning compression (PTC) of concrete slabs, according to Maj. Chad Wendolek, officer-in-charge of the IZ Resident Office. "When you have a large span [of a building site] that's under load, one of techniques is do the post tensioning of concrete," said Wendolek. "And since the original contractor used the post tensioning process for original construc-



USACE Gulf Region District Commander, Col. Dan Anninos, inspects post tensioning cables on the seven-story office complex of the Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunication Center. (GRD photo by Mike Scheck)

tion, we needed to hire a new contractor with experience in the process. One of the reasons that the Al-Kufan Group was chosen as the general contractor was its reliance on the CCL Group, a U.S. based company considered an industry leader in PTC construction."

The standard process to reinforce concrete is to use rebar; steel bars within the concrete slabs. The process was invented by a French florist in 1867 as a way to reinforce flowerpots. Although concrete is strong in compression, it is weak in tension thereby making it prone to cracking during the settling process. Post tension takes the rebar process one step further through the use of steel cable strands that are pulled tight once the concrete is cured to 75 percent of design strength. And

unlike rebar that only keeps the slab intact after cracking, post tension compression continually adds integrity to the concrete.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$9.1 billion, and has more than 250 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

The Gulf Region District, headquartered in Baghdad, Iraq is a joint effort comprising Civilians, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Contractors. GRD provides quality and sustainable engineering in support of civil/military construction in Iraq. GRS and its Iraqi partners are building a strong foundation for Iraq's future.

BUILDING STRONG® is the official slogan of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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