

Jun 21 2010

## **Johnson: Ellsworth Chosen for New Mission**

Decision brings hundreds of jobs to state

Contact: Julianne Fisher, 202-224-1638

**Washington, DC** — U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) today announced that Ellsworth Air Force Base has been chosen as the site for a new MQ-1 and MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft operation. The decision, announced today by the Air Force, will bring hundreds of jobs to the base. The squadron of 280 personnel is due to be in place as early as January 2012. A second squadron will be stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri.

“This decision by the Air Force recognizes the strengths of Ellsworth Air Force Base, and is a testament to the great work that has been done across the board to keep this a world class facility. As Chairman, I have been working day and night to keep this base ready for any future mission, and I’m proud that these efforts and those of our entire delegation have played a role in bringing hundreds of new jobs to South Dakota,” said Johnson, Chairman of the Military Construction Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Johnson joined members of the South Dakota Congressional delegation in sending a letter to Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Norton A. Schwartz highlighting the strengths of the base during the evaluation process in April. Four bases across the country, including Ellsworth, were among the finalists considered for this mission.

Johnson has used his Chairmanship and seat on the Appropriations Committee to maintain and improve infrastructure at Ellsworth to ensure it is ready for future missions. Over the last three fiscal years alone, Johnson secured \$14.5 million for a new deployment center, \$11 million for base entry and perimeter gates and \$16.6 million for a base civil engineer administrative facility.

Last month, Johnson also announced that the Obama Administration released its outline for civilian and military personnel changes at Air Force bases across the country for FY2011, which will add a total of 53 civilian and 14 military positions at Ellsworth.

###