

Looking good

2 Puget Sound IDS facilities to get interior makeover

By BILL SEIL

Through a \$132 million refurbishment program, Boeing is modernizing the interiors of Integrated Defense Systems facilities in Kent, Wash., and at the Developmental Center in Seattle. The idea is to create collaborative, user-friendly work areas—in response to employee survey results—and support the company's strategy for better asset utilization.

Kyle Duncan, IDS Puget Sound site director, said the new interior architecture gives the office areas a feeling of openness, while work space density is typical of other offices.

"It's a more enticing environment with better amenities," Duncan said. "The goal is to increase both comfort and productivity."

Doyle Harmon, Future Combat Systems integrated scheduling specialist, considers the new offices a big improvement. His cubicle, located near large windows, is well-lit, with adjustable furnishings and ample work space.

"Even in the winter when it's a little gloomy outside, the light coming in through the windows makes it a lot brighter than you'd get from the overhead lighting," Harmon said. "It's just great."

The new design allows for quick restructuring to meet the needs of new tenants.

"We're trying to get away from the idea that when one program moves out, you have to go in and redo the building for another group," said Tom Leonard, refurbishment program manager for IDS facilities in Puget Sound. "We want a design that is quickly adaptable to changing needs and variations in the number of occupants."

This is done, in part, by placing small, medium and large rooms at strategic locations around the floor. These rooms can be used as conference rooms, enclosed offices, privacy

The 9-90 building at the Boeing Developmental Center in Seattle includes several video-conferencing centers. They are used by programs such as Future Combat Systems to work virtually with colleagues across the U.S. and throughout the world.

JIM ANDERSON PHOTO

rooms, “huddle” rooms and storage areas. Furniture is standardized so it can be used wherever it is needed. Buildings also are being designed with walled-in sections that can be quickly sealed to create secure work areas.

In planning the refurbishment, project leaders solicited input from employees.

“We got teams together with the designers and said, ‘OK, we’re going to take a little time so you can tell us what you’d like to see in the building,’” Leonard said. “‘You may not get everything you want, but you’ve got a chance to give us input.’”

Some buildings at the Developmental Center now are complete and in use, and special accommodations were added in response to employee requests. For example, the 9-90 building now features showers and bicycle racks for employees who bicycle to work. The entire second-floor office area of the Developmental Center’s 9-101 building will be upgraded by 2013.

Over the next few years, three major office buildings in Kent—buildings 18-05, 18-26 and 18-28—will be refurbished. Some older buildings are scheduled for demolition beginning in 2010.

Leaders are studying ways for the Kent upgrades to be certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, sponsored by the U.S. Green Business Council. A number of environmentally-friendly features are being studied, including limited use of solar energy and wind power.

The refurbishment program runs through 2013. ■

william.j.seil@boeing.com

Sites helped open ‘space age’

The lunar roving vehicle that U.S. astronauts drove on the moon was designed, built and test-driven at the Boeing Space Center in Kent, Wash.

Around the same time, Boeing was designing a Supersonic Transport at its Developmental Center in Seattle, where a full-scale mock-up of the airplane was on display. While this competitor to the Concorde was never built, the project made headlines around the world.

Both locations—whose office facilities are undergoing a major upgrade—have played an important role in aerospace research and development over the past four decades. They were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s when Boeing was preparing to participate in several major programs, including the exploration of space.

“It was a period in the company’s history, and throughout the industry as a whole, when there was a tremendous focus on research and development,” said Mike Lombardi, Boeing corporate historian. “It was a wonderfully exciting time, which was best symbolized by the Apollo landings on the moon.”

The Boeing Developmental Center was dedicated in March 1959 to the late William E. Boeing, founder of the company. The center included multiple laboratories and test facilities supporting such programs as the Dyna-Soar space vehicle for the U.S. Air Force and Minuteman, the United States’ first intercontinental ballistic missile. While Minuteman became one of the company’s longest military



This photo, taken around 1970 at the Boeing Space Center in Kent, Wash., shows a Boeing team working on the Lunar Roving Vehicle for the Apollo program.

BOEING ARCHIVES PHOTO

contracts, Dyna-Soar was canceled in 1963, before its first orbital flight.

Lombardi said the Developmental Center has long maintained its character as a place where new ideas come to life. Not only did teams there design new products, they also built prototypes.

The Boeing Space Center in Kent was dedicated in October 1965 with NASA Administrator James Webb as the featured speaker. In addition to creating advanced hardware, such as the Lunar Roving Vehicle, teams there developed science and technology to support space exploration. The site featured space-flight simulators to develop rendezvous and docking techniques astronauts would use.

Today, the Space Center and Developmental Center play important roles in advanced programs such as Future Combat Systems.

—Bill Seil

Dig the new digs

Here are some features of the upgraded Developmental Center and Kent Space Center facilities.

- Cafes, lounges and informal discussion areas
- Wireless access and improved cell-phone reception
- Digital conference rooms with plasma screens and videoconference rooms
- Cubicles placed near windows; enclosed offices and common facilities located toward center of building
- Copy machines, plotters and other equipment in enclosed areas to reduce noise
- Adjustable, ergonomic furnishings
- Clear or frosted cubicle screens, which allow light propagation while reducing noise
- Soothing colors and rounded features, to produce a relaxing, creative work environment