

Langdon, ND (AP) - Although the builders of the Safeguard missile defense system are asking for an additional \$113 million to complete the job, cost overrun doesn't seem to upset the residents of the towns experiencing the greatest impact - Langdon, Nekoma, Walhalla, and Cavalier.

Businessmen in the ABM impact area have reaped tremendous economic benefits from the building of the Missile Site Radar facilities north of Nekoma and the Perimeter Acquisition Radar site, south of Walhalla.

Bars, restaurants, gas stations and grocery stores are receiving the biggest economic boost and a recent survey shows that missile workers are living in more than 100 communities in the ABM area, some as far as Grand Forks, more than 60 miles away.

Construction is expected to be completed in 1974 and at that time, the facility will be turned over to the Army Air Defense Command.

But, the benefits will not stop when the construction is completed. Approximately 1,200 to 1,300 permanent residents will remain, including 800 civilians and 500 military personnel.

The population of Langdon has increased from a little more than 2,000 to about 4,600. Nekoma has gone from about 80 to about 200.

The economy has been helped but there have also been problems.

Dr. Harold Blanchard, Langdon chiropractor and president of the city commission, said the worst is over. He said early morning telephone calls to his house were a common occurrence when the lack of water pressure bothered the city three years ago. He said, however, with the help of impact aid funds, the aches and pains were soothed.

A million dollar water and sewer project was completed with \$535,000 of it coming from impact funds. Another \$500,000 in federal funds was allocated for new streets.

A pipeline from Mount Carmel Dam, 11 miles from Langdon, has replenished the city's dwindling water supply.

There has been a 15 room addition to the Langdon Elementary School, fully funded by the federal government.

Federal funds have been received for hospital construction, recreation, and other areas of building, including \$20,000 for a new fire truck.

But, it was not all handout. A \$110,000 city and fire hall was built with local funds and nearly half of the million dollar cost for the water and sewer project was spread against property owners in the city.

Housing continues to be a problem in Langdon, but it is not as critical as it was in the early days of the ABM project. Hillcrest Manor, originally built by Morrison-Knudsen, the builders of the ABM sites, has been purchased by three Langdon residents and now contains 170 trailers. Another 175 trailers occupy the Cavalier Estates in Langdon. Basements and spare bedrooms have been rented out by the city residents while apartment houses and condominiums have been constructed.

Mayor Bill Verwey of Nekoma says the atmosphere is considerably more friendly than it was in the early stages of the project. At one time, Verwey had prohibited trucks from using the city's dirt street. Today the street is paved.

But the mayor feels the biggest growth is in the future for Nekoma. City sewer and water systems should contribute to the town's growth.

The government also provided a new fire truck.

A new elementary school is expected to be completed in time for the 1974-75 school year.

The mayors of both Langdon and Nekoma said their communities are over the rough spots.

"It won't be clear sailing from here on out, but what we've learned the past three years is going to make it a lot easier to see the ABM project through to completion," said Dr. Blanchard.