

"packages"—conflicts which needed to be resolved locally. Local leaders had been advised months before that no Federal agency would act as an arbitrator in a dispute between two different local interests. Because of a lack of full communication, conflicts had been developed between the Kansas Wesleyan proposal, the Schilling Institute proposal, and the municipal airport "package." The university was including areas and buildings that were also in the preliminary technical institute planning. Members of the industrial development committee of the chamber of commerce were showing buildings to prospective clients that were in one or another of the educational "packages," and equally serious variations of this general situation. In a series of meetings in mid-May these conflicts were eliminated and procedures agreed upon to prevent reoccurrence.

On 24 May 1965, Don Bradford led a large group of Federal officials from Washington and from the Kansas City regional offices in a 3-day series of meetings with base officials and community leaders. The No. 1 purpose was an attempt to set up a timetable for the takeover of areas of the base by the proposed civilian users. In substance, the only definite date decided upon was that of occupancy of certain buildings by the Vocational-Technical High School, which was committed to opening its doors on or before September 1. It was decided that an occupancy permit would be made to the Salina board of education by mid-July. Mr. Bradford told a news conference that he wished he could tell the community that the other "packages" were as close to reality. He commented that the disposal of a base as large as Schilling was enormously complex and that each proposal involved hundreds of details and many decisions. It was at this meeting that the community leaders fully realized a basic fact of life with respect to conversion of Federal property to civilian uses through the established procedures of surplus disposal. The community had, from the very day of closing, been directing almost all of its inquiries toward Washington. They, as they had been warned, became aware of the importance of the regional offices of the agencies involved in implementing the disposal procedures as set forth in the laws and regulations for such actions. While it was true that Washington approval was required in many instances, the fact remained that without regional approval our proposals would be of little value. Except for necessary liaison and communication with the Office of Economic Adjustment in Washington, the community leaders turned to the regional office representatives for assistance and advice.

The requirement that the entire facility be appraised by qualified appraisers prior to the transfer of any properties had been a subject of much discussion and, in the first week of June, that work began. In an effort to expedite this phase of the disposal procedures, the Airport Authority office assisted the appraisers in every way possible to bring that long and involved task to a quick conclusion.

Chapter IV

IMPLEMENTING THE CONVERSION PLAN

In June 1965 the mood of the community was changing and the authority members were spending more and more long days away from their businesses.