

## **HAFB PANEL WILL BEGIN D.C. BATTLE**

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The battle to keep Hill Air Force Base and the Defense Depot Ogden off the 1995 military base closure list is already under way, and round one of a two-year fight will be held Nov. 7-10 in Washington, D.C.

The Hill/DDO '95 committee is a recently incorporated, private organization formed to ensure the two bases make the best possible presentations to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, set to convene in 1995. Fourteen committee members will fly back to the nation's capital Sunday to meet with high-ranking Air Force and Department of Defense leaders to get a head start on convincing them Hill is worth saving.

President of the Hill/DDO '95 committee is retired Air Force Gen. Michael Pavich of Ogden. Scott Parkinson, executive director Ogden/Weber Chamber of Commerce and another member of the Hill/DDO committee, said the November meetings have been set up for Utah's benefit alone and are just one of many persuasive excursions planned during the next two years.

``These meetings are exclusively for us. . . . There's a lot of competition out there," Parkinson said.

He said the possible closure of Hill or DDO is not a Davis-Weber County effort or even just a northern Utah problem - the Hill/DDO committee is looking at it as a statewide issue with corresponding effort.

``This is such an enormous project," he said.

The Utah committee will meet with Department of Defense officials Monday afternoon in the Pentagon, then sit down with base closure commission officials Tuesday in Virginia. On Wednesday, they'll host a special breakfast in the U.S. Capitol with as much of Utah's congressional delegation as possible.

The visit will key on Hill being among the most efficient of bases and will go over various ideas and options to get ahead of the game - something Utah did not do with the Tooele Army Depot.

Hill was first rumored for possible closure in 1993. It is now included with four other Air Force bases for closure consideration. The Air Force has gone on record as wanting to keep all five of those bases open.

The 1993 Base Realignment and Closure Committee concluded that Hill should not be closed because of its high efficiency. The Hill/DDO committee will remind Pentagon officials of that.

The Hill/DDO group is also involved in a fund-raising effort to assist in its lobbying and presentations over the next two years.

Gov. Mike Leavitt gave the group \$250,000 last month. Parkinson, who is also co-chairman of the state's defense conversion team, said Hill/DDO '95 has raised approximately \$30,000 so far from private sources. The group's goal is to raise \$1 million.