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## **Report: Air base economic impact tops \$360 million**

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Grand Forks Air Force Base had an economic impact of more than \$360 million on the area during fiscal year 2007, according to a report released Wednesday by the base.

The base's economic impact on the area was up from \$353 million in the previous report from fiscal year 2006.

The report, which was compiled using an Air Force program, measured the base's impact using the base's payroll and spending and the estimated value of jobs it created in fiscal year 2007, which ended Sept. 30, 2007.

The base had 2,168 active duty military members, 915 of them living off base; 2,061 family members; and an additional 1,154 civilian employees for a total of 5,383, according to the report.

The base had a total payroll of \$138.9 million, including civilians and private businesses, annual expenditures of \$185.7 million and created an estimated 1,125 indirect jobs valued at \$35.9 million for a total economic impact of \$360,641,214.

Grand Forks Air Force Base's number of active duty military members and total personnel are both down about 20 percent from the same time five years ago.

The base is transforming from a primary air refueling tanker base to one that specializes in unmanned aerial vehicles. The change means fewer airmen stationed at the base, though the number could rebound if the Pentagon adds more UAVs and possibly even another air refueling tanker mission as local officials hope.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley said in March that the Air Force was on track to deliver UAVs to the base starting in 2009. In addition to the Predator and Global Hawk UAV missions the base is expected to secure, Grand Forks Air Force Base has also been listed as a potential home of the KC-X next generation air refueling tanker in the Air Force Weapons System Roadmap released in January.