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FASTC opens its doors and ushers in a new era for DSS training

DSS ARTICLES

BY ERIC WEINER, DSS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Under Secretary of State for Management Brian Bulatao (far left) and

General Services Administration Administrator Emily Murphy (second from left) cut the ribbon held by Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Michael T. Evanoff (third from left) to officially open the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) in Blackstone, Va., Nov. 14, 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)

Six Dodge chargers careened around the track at 80 miles per hour, conducting controlled skids, stops and quick-turn maneuvers for U.S. federal officials holding on tightly inside.

The track was the site of several demonstrations during the inauguration of the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) in Blackstone, Va., on November 14, 2019.

After participating in several training demonstrations and a tour of the FASTC facilities, Under Secretary of State for Management Brian Bulatao, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Michael T. Evanoff, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Training Wendy Bashnan and General Services Administration Administrator Emily Murphy led the official FASTC ribbon-cutting ceremony before an audience of several hundred federal, state and local officials, as well as friends and families of DSS personnel.

The ceremony ushered in a new era for training at the state-of-the-art facility. Under Secretary Bulatao declared FASTC open for business and ready to train DSS special agents to protect U.S. diplomats and missions.

Located on 1,350 acres of the 55,000-acre training complex at Ft. Pickett, a Virginia Army National Guard installation, FASTC allowed DSS and the broader Department of State to consolidate 11 separate training sites. The facility will train roughly 10,000 students annually including DSS special agents, other Department personnel and the larger foreign affairs community. All U.S. government employees working abroad under the security responsibility of the Secretary of State will receive Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training at FASTC in the coming months and years.

FASTC is the nation's largest provider of foreign affairs security training. The campus includes three high-speed driving tracks, off-road and improved tracks, explosives ranges, tactical structures to simulate risk of

serious injury or death situations and two smokehouses for situations when fire is used as a weapon. Training also includes land navigation, capstone exercises and scenarios involving a mock embassy compound. Some of the training courses offered at FASTC include surveillance detection, emergency medical care, recognizing improvised explosive devices, firearms familiarization and defensive and counterterrorism driving maneuvers.

“As a former DSS Special Agent, I know firsthand the importance of FASTC. It will help us face the threats we may encounter in our assignments overseas,” said Assistant Secretary Evanoff. “This facility is unlike anything in the federal government, and we are proud to call it home.”

View more great FASTC inauguration [photos](#) and [videos](#).



Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Michael T. Evanoff (left) cuts the cake as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Training Wendy Bashnan (right) looks on, marking the official opening of FASTC in Blackstone, Va., Nov. 14, 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)



Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Michael T. Evanoff (second from left) and General Services Administration Administrator Emily Murphy (third from left) tour the vehicle maintenance facility at FASTC immediately before the inauguration ceremony begins in Blackstone, Va., Nov. 14, 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)



Diplomatic Security Service trainers demonstrate high-speed vehicle skids for media covering the inauguration of FASTC in Blackstone, Va., Nov. 14, 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)



Diplomatic Security Service trainers demonstrate how to navigate an off-road obstacle track for media covering the inauguration of FASTC in Blackstone, Va., Nov. 14, 2019. (U.S. Department of State photo)

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