

# No answer on 5th BCT

## Hinesville representatives return from lobbying trip to Washington

By Lauren Hunsberger

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Mayor Jim Thomas, County Commissioner John McIver, State Rep. Al Williams, D-Midway, and Clay Sykes recently made a whirlwind trip to Washington, D.C., with one purpose.

"We went to tell our story," Thomas said. "And our story was

well received."

With the Department of Defense's original plan to station the 5th Brigade Combat Team at Fort Stewart now up in the air, the local officials traveled to Washington to state their case for receiving the new troops to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installation and environment and the Army G3 operations.

"They recognized the importance



Thomas

of Fort Stewart," Thomas said.

The group also visited with congressional staffers, who Thomas said already are writing letters to the Department of Defense and President Barack Obama on behalf of Hinesville and Fort Stewart.

"Both senators in the staff were very supportive," Thomas said.

Although he said the convoy did

get a good amount of support, the group didn't get a firm answer regarding the brigade's location.

"They couldn't tell us exactly when [they're making a decision], but said it'll be around the middle part of May," Thomas said.

They did get good news, however, that gave the group some hope.

"One good sign is that the contracts with the Army Corp of Engineers are still coming. They haven't stopped any of them. In fact, they

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just sent some more," the mayor said.

Because the Army Corp of Engineers is in charge of all construction projects, Thomas said he was very

happy to see the major projects on Fort Stewart are still on track.

Another positive sign, he said, is that Hinesville's representatives were

the first of all the cities in contention for losing a brigade to lobby in Washington.

"I felt we needed to go quickly," he said.