Ellsworth Air Force Base Impact
A Strategic National Defense Asset & An Economic Juggernaut
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Impact on National Defense:

Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota is critically important to U.S. defense, serving as a cornerstone of strategic deterrence and long-range strike capabilities. As the future home of the B-21 Raider stealth bomber and current home to the 28th Bomb Wing's B-1B Lancers, it provides unique, rapid-response capabilities for global combat operations, supported by MQ-9 Reaper drone operators.

Key Strategic Importance:

- Future B-21 Hub: Ellsworth was selected as the first base to host the B-21 Raider bomber and accompanying training wing, reinforcing the base's long-term, critical role in national security.

- Strategic Strike Capacity: Home to the 28th Bomb Wing, which operates a significant portion of the Air Force's B-1B Lancer fleet, providing massive payload, long-range conventional strike capabilities.

- Global Reach & Response: The base enables rapid, global deployment, exemplified by missions anywhere on earth, directly supporting combatant commanders.

- Unmanned Aerial Systems: The 432nd Attack Squadron and 89th Attack Squadron operate MQ-9 Reaper missions, providing vital, continuous surveillance and precision strike capabilities around the globe.

- Training & Infrastructure**:** The base houses the Powder River Training Complex, a massive training area for bomber operations, which is undergoing expansion to support the new B-21 mission.

As a key asset under Air Force Global Strike Command, Ellsworth continues to evolve from its Cold War roots to a central, modern combat center, ensuring it remains vital to 21st-century defense.

Impact on the Economy (Local & State):

Ellsworth Air Force Base has an annual economic impact of approximately *$886.8 million* (2023), serving as a major economic engine for western South Dakota.

The base supports roughly 9,100 personnel, including active duty, civilians, and dependents—and creates more than 7,900 jobs (direct and indirect). B-21 bomber expansion projects are adding $2 billion dollars in construction investment.

Ellsworth Air Force Base is *the largest employer in western South Dakota and ranks as the second-largest employer in the entire state of South Dakota*.

Key Economic Drivers and Data:

- Total Economic Impact: $886.8 million (2023), with projections likely to increase due to the B-21 mission.

- Employment: Currently supports 9,100+ total personnel (with an estimated 11,792+ following B-21 arrival), creating more than 7,900+ jobs.

- Payroll: The total annual payroll is nearly $200 million, while indirect payroll adds another $166 million for a total of more than $366 million.

- Construction: Ongoing B-21 projects are generating nearly $2 billion in local and federal construction contracts.

- Excise and sales tax: Nearly $80 million in sales and excise taxes will be generated due to current and ongoing construction on Ellsworth.

- Local Impact: The City of Box Elder, which serves the base, saw a 50.5% population increase from 2010 to 2020 and is experiencing significant infrastructure and residential development to support the influx of personnel.

Future Outlook:
The arrival of the B-21 Raider is expected to further boost economic impact. Not only is $2 billion in construction investment occurring, but the installation will also see an increase in the number of service members to arrive to support the new mission. This uptick in activity will spur additional community and business growth.