







# CIVILIAN ASSISTANCE UPDATE

## مستجدات المساعدات المدنية



### Dhi Qar

The PRT distributed replacement batteries for laptop computers previously supplied under the One Laptop per Child program. The batteries were appreciated by the teachers who use the computers in their classroom.

The PRT commenced training at a new High Tech Language Laboratory at the Mittica Training Center. The subscriptions to the training have reached incredible numbers and it has become clear that the lab will become a cornerstone at the PRT Training Center. PRT staff is also learning how to use the lab so as to be able to train whoever is eager to learn and can then train future trainees. The Ministry of Education will take over the equipment in the future.

### Maysan

The Ali Al Gharbi Company of Iraq delivered 600 tons of seeds to the Amarah DG of Agriculture Warehouse. 300 tons of wheat seeds and 300 tons of barley seeds. The seeds were tested and certified by the Bagdad Ministry of Agriculture office.

The \$400,000 purchase of these supplies by U.S. Forces for the Farmers Association of Maysan was critical to the farming economy which has been struggling from an unsuccessful crop yield this year. The farming infrastructure is a large contribution of the economy of the largely rural Maysan Province. The local farmers were finding it increasingly hard to get the seeds they needed for planting season in late-October. This project has enabled farmers to reestablish their businesses.



### Muthanna

The PRT Team Leader and staff participated in the grand opening of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the Chamber of Commerce (COC) in Samawah. The Executive Director of the SBDC told the assembled audience of business and political leaders that the overarching goal of the Center is to promote and enhance the economic growth and vitality of businesses through training opportunities, hosting conferences and seminars, and making available consultation services to affiliated members. This project, financed by CERP and USAID/Tijara, will help the community to start, sustain and expand businesses in the Muthanna province.

## CULTURAL BOX

## الحقبة الثقافية

### Ashura Tradition

Ashura occurs this year on December 27, 2009. It is a holiday observed by all Muslims, but is of particular significance to Shia Muslims. Ashura involves large-scale pilgrimages to Shia Holy Sites at Najaf, Karbala, and Khadamiya. Pilgrims re-enact the suffering of the third Imam, Hussein Ibn Ali, who is believed to have been martyred for his effort to resist the tyranny of the Ummayyad dynasty (7th Century AD). Pilgrimage participants may engage in self-flagellation and other acts of self-sacrifice.

Many people in southern Iraqi cities will open their homes and provide food and water for people making the pilgrimage.

