



town has succeeded in its bid to acquire a number of positions in the newly developing labor force for the new military base, *Ir HaBahadim* (Hebrew: City of the Training Bases), to be built just south of Be'er Sheva. As the name implies, *Ir HaBahadim* will be more of a new town in the Negev than merely a base, designed to house the Israel Defense Force's Armaments School, Logistics Training School, Military Police, as well as providing a variety of essential facilities for a population of between 10,000 and 20,000 servicemen and women. This will translate into numerous jobs, though Kher notes that virtually all of that will be available to the bedouin in the low-skilled, lower paying fields (laundry, food services, etc.). It was noted at the conference by one civic agency representative whose goal is to increase non-discriminatory practices (such as hiring) in the workforce that high security jobs in particular will not likely be availed to bedouin community members.

Kher adds that the poultry processing plant that was previously only in the planning stages is nearly completed in Segev Shalom as well, and will be up and running, employing perhaps 450 employees, by early 2010. Once the plant has achieved full operating capacity, it is believed that this number may double, and that female employees will likely be a significant part of its labor force, given the close proximity of the Industrial Zone to *Shekhuna Bet*.

"So," Kher asks me as we head back toward my rental car, the sky beginning to darken in anticipation of a terrific early summer storm, "when are you coming back?" "Soon," I respond as I distractedly mull over the past few hours of discussion, my mind racing in anticipation of yet further study of what lies ahead for the bedouin of the Negev in general, and Segev Shalom in particular, "*Insh'Allah*, very, very soon."