Ajdabiya is a city of approximately 134,300 people, located in the eastern Libyan province of Cyrenaica near the Mediterranean Sea. The city lies approximately 6.4 kilometers (4 miles) from the eastern end of the Gulf of Sidra, where the gulf turns westward towards Tripolitania. Ajdabiya lies in an important geostrategic region of the country, with Tripoli 850 kilometers (528 miles) to the west, and Benghazi 150 kilometers (93 miles) to the northeast. Brega, with a population of approximately 13,700, is located 72 kilometers (45 miles) southwest of Ajdabiya, and 196 kilometers (122 miles) southwest of Benghazi, directly on the Mediterranean Sea, at the bottom part of the Gulf of Sidra. The Marsa Brega Airport lies to the southeast of the town.

Ajdabiya is the capital of the Al-Wahat District of Cyrenaica. The city itself is composed of three boroughs, North Ajdabiya, West Ajdabiya and East Ajdabiya. The Libyan Coastal Highway bisects the city, with smaller roads leading west to the Gulf of Sidra and southeast into the Cyrenaican interior. Another road leads east to Tubruq on the Egyptian border.

Brega lies to the west of Ajdabiya, towards Sirte and Tripoli. Prior to World War II, the town was a small fishing village but with the discovery of oil in the Sirte Basin, Brega grew into a major oil production and shipping center. The city of Brega is composed of a number of smaller towns and industrial facilities and is home to the fifth largest Libyan oil, natural gas and petrochemical refineries.

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3 These “boroughs” were in effect the “Basic People’s Congresses” that constituted the basic governmental building blocks of Libyan society during the Qadhafi era.
Map 4: Regional map of Ajdabiya and Brega (Map data © 2013 Google).