

**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD
CLOSED BASE COMMUNITY
(TWO WINNERS)**

*Wally Horton, Former Executive
Director, Heath-Newark-Licking
County Port Authority, Ohio*



Every so often, the success of an enterprise is almost entirely dependent on the efforts of one individual. In the case of the privatization-in-place of Newark Air Force Base initiated in 1993 after the Defense Department had recommended it for closure, Wally Horton was that one individual. It was Mr. Horton's unique vision that convinced the Air Force, the BRAC Commission, defense contractors and local residents that most of the jobs at the base could be retained by transferring ownership of the laboratory and guidance systems repair depot to a newly created port authority. Rather than worrying about "saving the base," he put together a diverse group of local elected officials and business leaders to lobby the congressional delegation and rally the community toward his novel idea.

At the time, Mr. Horton came out of retirement—after serving as the top civilian at the Air Force lab—to demonstrate the irreplaceable nature of the facility that he helped establish 31 years earlier. As the head of the local reuse commission, he developed a reuse plan and pushed the facility's transition, accomplished in three years, to the Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center. Two prime contractors took over much of the workload of the former base.

Afterward, as the first executive director of the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority and later as a member of the board of directors, Mr. Horton continued to champion the former base's cause. Today, the technology center is home to 22 different employers, 940 high-tech jobs and a \$200 million annual economic impact. Is there life after base closure? Just ask Wally Horton.



2005 DEFENSE
COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Community Leadership
Award**

Wallace Horton

June 6, 2005