



March 30, 2005

NAID/ADC Awards Committee  
734 15th Street, NW  
Suite 900,  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Committee Members:

We are writing to affirm our support of Wally Horton's nomination for the **2005 Community Leadership Award**.

The Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority, the local redevelopment authority (LRA) for the former Newark Air Force Base, is right to nominate Mr. Horton for his incredible efforts over the years. Collectively, we represent the communities most impacted by the base.

Undoubtedly, our community would have been very different, for the worse, without Wally Horton's leadership. Wally's vision and achievements, particularly as the leader of the local reuse commission and the port authority, have made our community a better place to live and work.

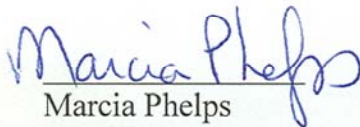
His efforts stand out and he is a leader others should desire to emulate.

We strongly encourage your approval of this nomination. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jay Baird  
Commissioner  
Licking County




Marcia Phelps  
Commissioner  
Licking County



Tim Bubb  
Commissioner  
Licking County



Daniel L. Dupps  
Mayor  
City of Heath



Bruce Bain  
Mayor  
City of Newark



Stephen Layman  
Board Chairman  
Port Authority



## **Nomination for Community Leadership Award - Closed Base Community/LRA of Wallace “Wally” Horton**

**Nominated by NAID/ADC Member Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority**

When base closure is imminent and a community looks for leaders who will ensure the economic impact of the facility is maintained and the best possible outcome for the community is achieved, it looks for a team of people that includes someone who knows the history and military importance of the installation, someone who understands the niche and unique capabilities of the installation’s workforce, someone with the charisma and capability to rally the local community and the congressional delegation, and someone with the managerial skills to develop and implement a reuse plan. In the case of the former Newark Air Force Base in the community of Heath-Newark-Licking County, Ohio, that team of people was one man—Wally Horton.

Mr. Wallace Horton, as a community leader, is the person all communities facing base closure should seek to emulate. Through his dedication to his community and his firm, unwavering belief in the uniqueness and military value of the installation that he helped found, Wally was four people in one and helped retain an installation that today, 12 years after the announcement of base closure, is a success story with a \$200 million annual impact on Central Ohio and a model for successful base closure.

The NAID/Association of Defense Communities’ 2005 Community Leadership Award is a fitting recognition for someone whose individual efforts have had such a wide, significant impact. Wally has been widely recognized for his achievements and his successes have been noted so many times too numerous to mention in five short pages.

In 1996, Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, wrote to Wally, “You met the challenge with aggressiveness and creativity, viewing it as an opportunity, not a crisis. As a result, Newark has carved a path for thousands of others who are just beginning a similar journey.”

That same year, U.S. Senator John Glenn and then-Ohio Governor George Voinovich joined in their praise of Wally at the October 1, 1996 transition ceremony.

In early 2005, NAID/ADC Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Finkle, in a news release on the Newark Air Force Base’s being featured in NAID/ADC’s *Profiles in Privatization*, remarked “Knowing what was accomplished in Heath, Ohio, defense communities wondering what the future holds for BRAC 2005 should feel there is more than one outcome following a base closure or realignment. This is a success that has not been achieved in many communities.”

Lastly, Air Force Colonel (ret) Joe Renaud, the last commander of Newark Air Force Base and now Ohio Governor Bob Taft’s Aerospace and Defense Advisor, simply said, “Without Wally, the outcome would have been quite different.”

Wally’s leadership to the community of Heath-Newark-Licking County began over 40 years ago. Wally, who’s Air Force experience included service on the staff of General Curtis LeMay, was part of the team that, in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, founded the operation that became the Newark Air Force Base in Heath, Ohio. Thus, Wally not only knew the history of the base, he lived it! Wally came to Heath in 1962 as a civilian with the newly-established Newark Air Force Station. He served as the top civilian at the center which was established to run the Air Force’s metrology laboratories and inertial guidance system repair depot. Though he retired in 1973, he kept his home in Heath and watched over the facility like a proud father does

a child. He remarked once, “My proudest accomplishment wasn’t privatization of the base, it was founding it in the first place.”

He knew the niches that made Newark Air Force Base unique. It was Wally who deeply understood the key elements that ensured that Newark Air Force Base was too important to simply go away. Wally knew the ground stability, one-of-a-kind equipment, and particular skill sets among the personnel that were, from a practical sense, immovable and irreplaceable. He understood and set about convincing everyone from the 1993 BRAC and the Air Force to the original equipment manufacturers and the local community of the uniqueness of Newark Air Force Base. His total certainty of these facts was his strength. He was proven right.

Wally had the wisdom, though, to understand when it was time to put saving the base behind and start going about the business of privatization, something the Air Force had never done before. He put together a diverse group of local elected leaders and businessmen who together lobbied the congressional delegation and rallied the local community to get involved in ensuring the guidance systems repair depot and the metrology program would be retained in Heath through privatization-in-place (PIP).

Wally came out of retirement to head up the local reuse commission and the formation of an entity to serve as the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA). From that platform, he was focused on convincing the Air Force to continue toward privatization-in-place and convincing the local community to take the huge risk of assuming responsibility for a facility with a replacement value of over \$100 million and which housed equipment worth untold billions. Even some in the local community were skeptics. He won them over.

Wally’s team set about the task of transferring ownership of the property, which included the buildings, personal property, and integral parts of the facility, such as utilities and

environmental systems, from the Air Force to the newly-created port authority under an Economic Development Conveyance. Working with the U.S. Air Force on a lease back with the chosen contractors, the LRA was able to maintain a large percentage of the jobs in the community and its tax base. Additionally, the port authority would be able to solicit other business in the portions of the base that were not needed by the contractors, enabling the community to bring new jobs to the area.

At the helm of the Reuse Commission, Horton put together a Reuse Plan that was readily approved by the Commission and accepted by the Air Force. The three-year transition from base closure announcement to ownership transfer culminated on October 1, 1996, when the Newark Air Force Base became the Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center under ownership of the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority. Two prime contractors took over much of the workload of the former Newark Air Force Base and kept in place the essence of the guidance systems repair depot and metrology laboratories that Wally first helped bring to Heath in 1962.

Then, as the first Executive Director of the Port Authority, Wally continued to be a leader in the community, bringing together the elected officials and the contractors that were awarded the PIP. He envisioned the former Newark Air Force Base as a base upon which the future of the community would be built and set about efforts to not only be a capable steward of the 57-acre former base but also capitalize on that ownership to become a diverse, business location.

Wally retired from the Port Authority in 1998 but remained active and involved. In 2002, he was appointed by the Mayor of Heath to serve on the Port Authority Board of Directors and served his community for two more years.

Today, Wally is widely recognized in the community as the “Grandfather” of The Base, by which it is still known as in the community. His leadership continues.

Wally, through his leadership, ensured that the Newark Air Force Base privatization-in-place was a success and a model for base closure. He truly was four people in one.

Undoubtedly, during BRAC 2005, he will be called upon by communities around the nation for his experience as they consider life after base closure.

Today, The Base is home to 22 different employers ranging from *Fortune 100* companies (Boeing) to small businesses. The \$200 million annual economic impact, emboldened by over 940 high tech jobs and a \$54 million annual payroll, is still felt in the community. With 350 acres of land now under its domain, the port authority he founded to be the steward of the 57-acre former base has grown to become the fourth largest port authority in Ohio. Future generations can expect to find work at The Base he founded and, then, saved.

Without Wally, it's quite likely that the Newark Air Force Base today would, instead, be a pile of rubble and weeds.

It is fitting that he be recognized for his leadership on behalf of his community and his country with the **Community Leadership Award**.

Respectfully submitted by

NAID/ADC Member Rick Platt, Executive Director,

Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority

(740) 788-5500 ext. 35



Dec. 10, 2003  
Board Recognition Ceremony



Former Newark Air Force Base  
circa 2002



Nov. 2, 2004  
South Campus Groundbreaking



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SEP 16 1996

Mr. Wallace L. Horton  
Executive Director  
Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority  
P.O. Box 2330  
Heath, OH 43056-0330

Dear Mr. Horton:

On behalf of President Clinton, congratulations on making Air Force history! Newark is the tiny giant that has successfully led our efforts to implement base closure decisions impacting critical maintenance operations. This transfer of existing military workloads to private contractors in order to close the base and maintain a high level of readiness, is a significant achievement and you are to be commended for your accomplishment.

The magnitude of effort put forth by the personnel at Rockwell Guidance Repair Center, Autonetics and Missile Systems Division, Wyle Laboratories, and the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority is recognized by the President, the Department of Defense, private industry, and Congress. You met the challenge with aggressiveness and creativity, viewing it as an opportunity, not a crisis. As a result, Newark has carved a path for thousands of others who are just beginning a similar journey.

The Department of Defense must concentrate forces on truly military functions and transfer some operations to the private sector. We are responding to the taxpayers who demand and deserve fair value for government expenditures. We are committed to making this work.

Again, congratulations on your accomplishments and best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila E. Widnall".

Sheila E. Widnall



**OUR OPINION**

## Newark base evidence of hard work paying off

**F**ew among us believed the Pentagon's 1993 announcement of plans to close the Newark Air Force Base would — after much pain — turn into a blessing for so many in our community.

The base employed 1,500 people and pumped \$200 million a year into the local economy. A straight closure of the base created realistic predictions of doom and gloom at a time when the economy was still gaining its footing from the early '90s recession.

Thanks to the hard work of countless people across Licking County,

that did not happen. In fact, the site now holds promise for new jobs on newly acquired land and could play a vital role in the area's future.

Instead of closing, the Pentagon eventually agreed to privatize the base at its

**Today's topic**  
Licking Countians  
finally reap benefits  
after fighting for  
Newark Air Force  
Base.

existing site, the first time such a feat had been attempted.

Not only did local leaders need to win over Pentagon brass, but they also had to convince prospective contractors to take over government work at the Heath base even if it was cheaper to do so in their existing facilities elsewhere.

Well, as our two-day series made clear this week, our community overcame this challenge.

Ten years later, the Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center is home to two Fortune 100 companies and six of the top 20 defense contractors. That places the base in the top five largest concentrations of the aerospace and defense industry in Ohio.

In all, 975 people work there and the center and its employees pay more than \$1 million in taxes each year.

Yes, the economic impact may not come close to what it was 10 year ago. And we don't mean to discount the pain suffered by those who lost their jobs and were forced to move elsewhere.

But "the base" remains a critical engine for our local economy offering high-paying jobs instead of shuttered windows and sprouting weeds. That's the definition of success.