

# Office of the Mayor

As a proud Whidbey Island resident for over forty years, the recent court cases and discussions involving Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) and the jet noise are reminding me of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process undertaken in 1991. This was a challenging time for our community as the military was deciding whether the base on Whidbey Island would remain open, or close.

A base closure in 1991 would have affected many lives and had the potential to change the landscape of not only our community but surrounding communities. I will admit, as an Oak Harbor business owner with a family, I was worried about how closing NASWI would impact the area and our economy. I was greatly concerned about housing prices and local jobs.

Fast forward 31 years. NASWI is still open, and in fact, is an award-winning base known for its excellence in our country's military. Military units from other countries come here to train regularly. We are so fortunate for the staff, families, and base commanders which are a part of our community.

NASWI works hard to be a good neighbor and partner. One of the many ways they do this is by disclosing airport and aircraft operations noise detail to assist buyers planning to purchase a home or property. This information provides resources about the impacts of naval planes flying overhead. Additionally, they have designated encroachment areas and agreed to publish and share flight times with the public on a regular basis. They even alter schedules for special events to assist our communities and our tourism efforts.

I am thankful for the way that enlisted, retired, and support staff participate in our local community. City staff reminded me of the commitment military personnel provide through their volunteering efforts and some even return to operate businesses which makes Oak Harbor a wonderful place to live and visit.

I don't believe the decision makers defending our country could justify closing NASWI today, but I do believe that unless we talk more about the many reasons why we appreciate the Navy on and around this island that those in charge just might begin to think that supporters like me do not exist. We do exist, and there are thousands of us who appreciate you NASWI!



*Mayor Bob Severns*



**"Thank You NAS Whidbey Island for what you do every day"**