

Wm. Weston J. Newton, Chairman  
June 25, 2007  
Donald C. Winter

It is an honor to stand before you today with the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, The Honorable Donald C. Winter.

It is with great pride that I, on behalf of Beaufort County Council and the people of Beaufort County, welcome Dr. Winter to our wonderful part of the world, where the military plays such a significant role in our history and economy. Our Marines and Sailors are our not only our neighbors; they are our friends and family. Our past and our culture are closely intertwined here in Beaufort County and our many partnerships have not only benefited our national defense, they have improved the quality of life for all citizens... both military and civilian.

As you know, Beaufort County has the honor of being the first local government in the nation to partner with the Department of the Navy for the protection of a Marine Corps facility from encroachment. We are very proud of this designation, which was the result of an exceptional relationship with our military leaders. It came about in 2004 through the purchase of development rights on a 72-acre parcel adjacent to the air station. The price of \$312,740 was split equally between the military and the Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program. This not only protected MCAS from the impacts of future development along its boundaries, it removed the potential for nearly 200 additional cars per day on US 21 and helped protect the local environment and wildlife habitat.

Since 2004, Beaufort County has partnered with the military on three additional parcels of land totaling 185 acres. These tracts will remain undeveloped offering protection to our valuable Marine Corps facility forever. Through the county's Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program, there are likely to be future opportunities to partner with the federal government and we welcome them.

A Joint Land Use Plan developed by the military and the county also demonstrates a great deal of compatibility between civilian and military leaders here in Beaufort County. The plan balances the needs of the local economy, the demands of growth and the requirements of a strong national defense. Without cooperation and willingness to protect the interest of all, including the health and wellbeing of citizens, the plan would not have succeeded.

In conclusion, Beaufort County is blessed to have a dynamic military presence. It is one of our finest assets and we cherish it. We look forward to working amiably with our military leaders in the future, as we have many times in the past. Thank you, Dr. Winter, for visiting Beaufort County and the good will you have shown us all today.