

**Today is a day for remembering and for renewing our resolve**

By Chris Keuss, Executive Director, the Port of Edmonds

Seven years ago today: September 11, 2001. So recent yet—at the same time—it seems so long ago.

We awoke that morning to the voice on the radio telling us that an airplane had struck the World Trade Center. Later the nonstop TV coverage confirmed it. Before long we knew that it was not a light plane, that it was an airliner. Soon there were three other crashes and the sickening truth became apparent—these were deliberate acts and America was under attack.

Who it was and how extensive it was were questions yet to be answered. Because there was nothing else to do, most of us went through our morning routine in stunned disbelief. This can't be happening. Not here. Not in America.

Again, because there was nothing else we could do, we went to work, or to school, or to our breakfast meetings. Before the day was over we pretty much knew it all: the lives lost, the valiant heroes who gave everything, and the depth of the wounds to the American soul.

It was a Tuesday morning. I was the deputy director here at the Port, ten months away from assuming my present post. Five years earlier the Port had undergone its own devastating loss—ours caused by nature—and we were still dealing with a few of the issues. The result all around me, though, was that the Port was now a better place, stronger, better able to withstand nature's onslaughts, and once again flourishing.

After 9/11, the nation rallied as well. In the end America became a stronger, more secure place to live. Our transportation infrastructure—including our ferries—had become better protected and markedly safer. Locally, Edmonds' new fire and rescue boat based at the Port came about because of our nation's response to 9/11.

Every time people drove to the Port, or walked our promenade, or looked down on us from a thousand Edmonds viewpoints they saw our tall flagpole with its huge American flag standing

—continued

above us all. We all saw it in a new light; after 9/11 we had all become more dedicated patriots. We revered that flag and its symbolism of resolve, strength and a love of peace.

Today is a sobering day. It is a day for reflection and for renewed commitment to all that it means to be part of this great country. The tragic events that took place seven years ago today scarred each of us deeply, but we came through it and, in the end, we are a better nation. And we are all better Americans.

431 words