Community welcomes Navy pilots back to town

By NEIL YOUNG The Daily News | Posted: Wednesday, January 6, 2016 11:46 pm

BULLHEAD CITY — Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport is welcoming back the United States Navy Training Wing 4 to conduct flight training operations beginning Monday. The Navy hosted a meet and greet at Landmark Aviation on Wednesday morning, giving the public an opportunity to welcome Navy personnel to the community, view the Beechcraft T-6B Texan II military trainer aircraft, and ask questions of the pilots and support crew.

Training Wing 4 was established in March, 1972, and is currently composed of four squadrons. Training Squadrons Two-Seven and Two-Eight instruct student naval aviators in basic flight training. Training Squadrons Three-One and Three-Five instruct student aviators from the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard in intermediate and advanced flight training. The airport will be hosting Squadron Two-Seven and Two-Eight until March.

The Beechcraft T-6 aircraft used for training new aviators was originally constructed in 2000. The T-6B Texan II is an upgraded version of the T-6A with a digital glass cockpit that includes a heads-up display, six multi-function displays and hands-on throttle and stick.

"This advanced aircraft serves as a high performance trainer for future military pilots," said Jeremy Keating, airport director.

"There's going to be 25 aircraft here and right around 75 students at any given time, conducting their flight training," said Tim Bannon, assistant airport director.

The planes are based in Corpus Christi, Texas.

"We're really happy for the amount of people that came out to welcome the Navy and we're happy to have them here and we're happy to have community support," Bannon said.

There was no Navy personnel on site that had the authority to talk on record with the Daily News, but off the record, several expressed their happiness to be here and were looking forward to training in the warmer weather — whenever it decides to arrive.