

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

April:

COUNTY'S HEALTH GETTING WORSE

Mason County ranked 33rd out of Washington's 39 counties in terms of overall health, a drop from No. 31 in 2014, according to County Health Rankings released in late March.

According to the annual report, Mason County residents are more likely than residents statewide to be smokers, obese, physically inactive, less educated, unemployed and have children in poverty.

"People look at the rankings and see the No. 33 and they get concerned," said Allie Perline, the community health education specialist for the Mason County Public Health Department. But people should focus not on the rankings, but on how the numbers will be used as a "tool" to help inform the community to improve health, she said.

DATA SHOWS DEPRESSION, BULLYING UP IN SCHOOLS

More Mason County students reported being bullied and feeling depressed in 2014 compared to 2012, according to the state Healthy Youth Survey.

A slightly lower percentage of students reported using marijuana and alcohol in 2014 versus 2012.

GOVERNOR, CROWD ON HAND AT MTA CENTER'S OPENING

The new Transit-Community Center is on the site of a former railroad roundhouse in downtown Shelton, so it's appropriate that former state Rep. Kathy Haigh invoked the children's book "The Little Engine That Could" at the dedication of the facility April 1.

Mason County and City of Shelton officials said they couldn't take on the project, but Mason Transit Authority



Journal photo by Lloyd Mullen

Derek King throws debris from last year's shellfish season into a makeshift truck in April during a clean-up near Arcadia Point.

"stepped up and said, 'I think we can,' " Haigh said. The agency said "We're going to do it for the kids," she said.

Gov. Jay Inslee, U.S. Reps. Derek Kilmer and Denny Heck, and former Congressman Norm Dicks were among the guests when the \$10 million facility officially opened its doors.

GREEN DIAMOND: 100 MILLION TREES AND COUNTING

Green Diamond Resource Co. planned to plant 2.6 million trees in 2015, said Blayde Fry, vice president and general manager of the company's Northwest Division in Shelton.

One special sapling was singled out April 1 as the Shelton-based forest prod-

ucts company celebrated planting its 100 millionth tree.

Colin Mosely, chairman of Green Diamond and great-great-grandson of Simpson founder Sol Simpson, called the planting a "vote of confidence" in the timber industry, Green Diamond's employees and in the trees themselves.

The event also commemorated Green Diamond and Simpson Lumber Co.'s 125th anniversary.

Green Diamond officials, community members and state officials gathered at a 40-acre clearcut just off Lynch Road near Taylor Towne south of Shelton.