



PHOTOS BY ARLA SHEPHARD BULL

Mason County Commissioner Randy Neatherlin (center, in jacket) and Northridge Properties owner Jack Johnson (center, white shirt) cut the ribbon on a new temporary parking area in Belfair with Mason Transit Authority board members, employees and other community members.



Mason Transit Authority's temporary parking area features two bus shelters, like this one. The parking area is located at 320 NE Roy Boad Road behind Safeway.

New parking area open on Roy Boad Road

By Arla Shephard Bull
Mason County Life

Mason Transit Authority unveiled its new general public parking area in Belfair on July 1 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The temporary parking area, located at 320 NE Roy Boad Road behind Safeway, features 85 stalls including four accessible stalls, a bus loading area, two bus shelters and LED lighting.

"The lack of public parking available in the Belfair area has long been a challenge for both the community and transit users," said MTA general manager Danette Brannin. "This interim project will be a welcome benefit while we work to create a permanent park and ride."

The transit agency en-

tered into a three-year lease with Northridge Properties for the property, with the option to continue the agreement month-to-month following the three-year term.

So far, Mason Transit plans to use the parking area for its Worker/Driver program for commuters to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard; no regular bus routes are scheduled to stop at the parking area until October, said MTA development manager Mike Oliver.

Last year, Mason Transit Authority was awarded about \$10 million in grant funding through the Regional Mobility Program from the Department of Transportation to enhance existing park and rides in Mason County and build a

new one in Belfair.

Building a park and ride in Belfair is the agency's top priority, Oliver said, and the agency is looking into property for a permanent site, with the hope of seeing a finished park and ride by early 2020.

Until then, the temporary parking area is free and open to the public as well as transit users.

"MTA is thankful for the fantastic partnership with Northridge Properties and their hard work to make sure the parking area met all our safety requirements," Oliver said.

Persons using regular routes in Belfair who want to be picked up at the temporary parking area will need to call ahead and request route deviation for direct service.