



Journal photos by Gordon Weeks

AT LEFT: A packed gymnasium audience applauds a speech by Mason Transit General Manager Brad Patterson on April 1 at the opening and dedication of the Transit-Community Center. ABOVE RIGHT: Waiting for the ceremony to begin are, from left, Congressman Denny Heck, former Congressman Norm Dicks and Shelton Mayor Gary Cronce. All three spoke at the event. AT RIGHT: Gov. Jay Inslee addresses the audience.

Center: Governor calls new building a 'world-class facility'

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The Transit-Community Center project began in 2006 when MTA purchased the 57-year-old building from the National Guard.

Two years later, the state gave a \$235,000 community project grant for an engineering/design study that determined the building was a good candidate for renovation and preservation.

In 2011, MTA received a \$3.28 million Federal Transit Administration grant.

Last year, it received a federal grant for almost \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of

Transportation. About 400 of people packed the new gymnasium for the opening ceremony.

The center "will help make Shelton a place for kids to live and love, and stay and work," Haigh said.

Shelton Mayor Gary Cronce urged people to tell their Seattle friends that Shelton is a good place to live and establish a business.

"This is a start to an economic resurgence in this city," he said of the center.

Heck pointed out that many armory buildings, constructed for national security in the 1950s, are now getting second lives as community centers.

"This place is nothing short of transformative for this community," he said.

Heck added, "What does trailblazing look like? Look around this room."

Mason Transit Authority practiced innovation and entrepreneurship in creating the center, Kilmer said.

"This project happened because people thought outside the box," he said.

The governor called the center a "world-class facility" and a fine example of Washington's pioneering spirit.

"We are the most innovative, creative state in the union," he said.