

# The Daily Insider

Southern Washington Edition

## Vancouver's downtown Hilton Hotel and conference center is a done deal

Dignitaries by the scores ignored sub-freezing temperature this morning to help City Hall celebrate the final steps in a years-long process leading to an upscale downtown hotel and conference center.

An elated Mayor **Royce Pollard** declared he could sum up his feelings in three words—"Whoohaah! Congratulations, Vancouver."

During his part of a ground-breaking ceremony south of Esther Short Park shortly after 10 a.m., the mayor accepted a cell phone call from **Steve Burdick**, the city's go-to person, who announced that the bonds for the \$72 million facility had been sold this morning and that Hilton Hotels and the city have agreed to a contract which will see Hilton operate the hotel and conference center for the publicly owned 226-room hotel.

Before a dozen or more people symbolically shoveled sand, the first conventions for the hotel were announced. Scheduled for the spring of 2006 are the YWCA of Clark County and Southwest Washington Independent Forward Thrust dinners and auctions, a Washington State Labor Council annual convention, a district Rotary convention, the state Association of Municipal Attorneys convention, an Washington-Oregon Parks association convention, and a Vancouver Historic Trust and Celebrate Freedom function.

A downtown convention center has long been sought for Vancouver, but it wasn't until a group of business and industrial activists formed Identity Clark County nearly ten years ago that the idea caught fire. It was championed by City Hall after the business group put seed money into the project.

**ED Lynch**, ICC's only chair, this morning explained why the project has gotten to the actual construction phase.

Pollard, the champion and cheer leader, of the project has been reelected four times since the center has been before the city council. And every city councilperson who has been behind the project has also been reelected, said Lynch.

Thus Lynch thanked the voters of Vancouver for their part in boosting the project.

The seven-story building was designed by Portland architectural firm Fletcher Farr Ayotte, who also designed the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver and Portland's Westin Hotel.

Construction is expected to be completed late in 2005.

## Top Clark county events of 2003 driven by center on growth

Clark County, Wash., a community of more than a third of a million, persons grew by some 4,000 families during 2003. At a near 3 percent growth rate, the county has maintained its status as one of the fastest growing counties in the United States for the past dozen years. Even growing unemployment rates, which only slackened during the last few months of the year, did not deter growth.

The top story of the year 2003 for Vancouver was reported today as all the loose ends in the downtown hotel-

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conference center were tied and a ceremony celebrated the beginning of actual construction of the \$72 million facility.

This year saw planning and financing for an \$18 million eastside community center when **Ed** and **Mary Firstenburg** made a \$3 million contribution.

Clark County's \$40 million Community Service Center and downtown campus redesign was substantially completed this year, consolidating governmental offices, including some city offices with state offices, providing parking for jurors, and rehabilitating the courthouse for district and superior court judges.

The state legislature approved a five-cent gasoline tax that earmarked nearly \$200 million for Clark County road projects, two of which began this fall: \$34 million to widen I-5 north to I-205, and \$22 million for an interchange on Highway 500 at NE 112th Avenue.

Southwest Washington Medical Center, after hiring new hospital CEO **Joe Kortum**, began a \$120 million expansion project at its Mill Plain Boulevard campus that will upgrade and add hospital patient beds and surgical facilities. In Salmon Creek, Legacy Health System began construction of a 330-bed acute care hospital.

Washington State University Vancouver gained stature during the year after being granted greater autonomy within the state higher education system. With that change, WSU Vancouver's chief executive officer, **Hal Dengerink**, was named chancellor.

Other names making news were **Elson Strahan**, who was named executive director of the Vancouver Historic Reserve Trust, **Jimmy Buffet**, who packed a full house in the new Amphitheater at Clark County, and **Maya Lin**, who agreed to oversee a pedestrian overpass between the historic reserve and the Columbia River waterfront.

### Tuesday on the Air

Holiday Bowl: WSU vs. Texas (live)—5 p.m. ESPN

Portland State at Tennessee State (live)—5 p.m. KPOJ

County Commissioners Comp Plan Update (12/9)—6:30 p.m. CVTV

### Stocks of local interest at 4 p.m. EST Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2003

Alaska Air Group	27.57	-.37	Linear Technology	41.94	-.43
Alcoa	38.11	-.80	Microsoft	27.52	+0.06
Amazon.com	52.83	-.64	Nautilus	14.09	-.17
Bank of America	80.50	+20	Nike	68.06	+2.22
Bank of Clark County	15.00	unch	Nordstrom	34.11	-.05
Bemis	49.17	+0.07	PepsiCo	46.62	-.14
Boeing	42.28	+28	Precision Cast	45.20	-.41
Boise Cascade	32.55	+19	RLRN	24.56	+38
CenturyTel	32.59	+36	Starbucks	32.71	+41
Costco	37.29	+31	TSM	10.12	+10
Expeditors Intl.	37.85	-.81	Tektronix	32.11	+0.09
Georgia Pacific	30.87	+27	US Bancorp	29.77	+17
HPQ	22.93	unch	Wash. Mutual	40.17	+0.09
Intel	32.04	-.11	W. Coast Bancorp	21.73	+0.05
Kyocera	67.07	-.43	Weyerhaeuser	64.10	+45

DOW: 10,425.04 -24.96 NASDAQ: 2009.88 +3.4 S&P: 1109.64 +16

### Town Tabloids and The Weather

<b>Ed Barnes</b> in the thick of it. <i>ZZZ</i>	Acapulco	88/70
<b>Bob Moser</b> making the right pick. <i>ZZZ</i>	Athens	53/43
<i>ZZZ</i> <b>Ginger Metcalf</b> leading the choir.	Chicago	40/26
<i>ZZZ</i> <b>Steve Horenstein</b> offering	Dallas	60/38
glove off his hand. <i>ZZZ</i> <b>Chris</b>	Hong Kong	73/63
<b>Crowley</b> waiting out Congress. <i>ZZZ</i>	Los Angeles	60/48
<b>Cliff Barbour</b> coming to the aid. <i>ZZZ</i>	London	35/31
<i>ZZZ</i> <b>Tuesday</b> , white morning, gray later,	New Orleans	60/42
chilly, possible late snow, 38.	New York	52/36
<b>Wednesday</b> , cold and wet, 40.	Orlando	76/56
<b>Thursday</b> , gray but dry, 42.	Paris	35/25
	Phoenix	62/42
	Rome	48/37
	Seattle	36/33
	Sydney	88/69
	Tokyo	48/34
	Washington	55/29