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## **Bellevue Downtown Association Announces 2008 Place Making Award Winners**

**BELLEVUE, Wash.** – The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) announced this evening the winners of the 2008 Place Making Awards in seven categories at the organization’s 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration. More than 350 business and community leaders attended the event at Meydenbauer Center in Downtown Bellevue. Keynote speaker and mountain climbing legend Ed Viesturs shared lessons from his record-setting journeys and addressed the themes of risk, courage, teamwork, and perseverance.

The Bellevue Downtown Association’s Place Making Awards recognize peak achievements from the previous year, as well as extraordinary contributions toward creating a viable, livable, memorable and accessible downtown community.

“Owing to the hard work and vision of our businesses, residents and civic leaders, Downtown Bellevue continues to grow and thrive,” said Leslie Lloyd, president of the Bellevue Downtown Association. “The Place Making Award recipients represent those individuals and businesses that have been the vanguards of Downtown Bellevue’s transformation into the livable, viable and successful community it is today.

### **Civic Partner of the Year: Bellevue Parks & Community Services Department**

A new category for 2008, the Civic Partner of the Year Award recognizes the significant set of actions, spirit of support and consistent level of service demonstrated by the Bellevue Parks & Community Services Department. For the community and the BDA, the Downtown Park is home each year to the Symetra Bellevue Family 4<sup>th</sup> and the Group Health Ice Arena. These major events and experiences would not be possible without a strong, healthy partnership with the City and its staff.

### **Community Treasure: Bellevue Regional Library**

The Community Treasure Award recognizes an institution or landmark that has delivered exceptional value and service to the community. Bellevue Regional Library has served the community in its present form for 15 years. It receives close to a million visits per year, and has over 1.4 million items in circulation. Bellevue Regional Library is a home for knowledge and inspiration, and it is a public facility that is even more popular, relevant and vital in its service today as it was on opening day in 1993.

### **Commute Champion: Symetra Financial**

Maintaining an accessible downtown is essential for the continued success and growth of a community. It is anticipated that 63,000 employees will work in Downtown Bellevue by 2020; and to keep things moving, a City of Bellevue target calls for half commuting without driving alone in a motor vehicle. The Commute Champion Award recognizes the business that exemplifies a strong commitment to achieving this goal. Symetra Financial has made an outstanding “commute benefits program” an integral part of its corporate culture. In 2008, Symetra achieved a 58% non-drive alone commute rate, exceeding the City’s 2020 goal by 9%, meaning over half of their employees share a ride or use transit on a daily basis.

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**Lease of the Year: Microsoft Lease at City Center Plaza**

The Lease of the Year Award honors the people and companies who have negotiated a landmark leasing transaction in Downtown Bellevue. The Microsoft lease at City Center Plaza further solidified Downtown as a desirable place to work and live. In May 2008 Microsoft announced that it would lease one of the largest office projects under construction in Downtown Bellevue, City Center Plaza. Throughout this next year, Microsoft will move about 2,000 employees to City Center Plaza, taking up 25 of the building's 26 floors. This move builds on existing leases at Lincoln Square and The Bravern Office Commons, now making Microsoft recipient of the Lease of Year Award three years in a row.

**Move of the Year: Expedia**

Another new category for 2008, the Move of the Year Award was created to honor a company who places an emphasis on connecting people with place and community, and making long-term investments in both. Expedia, the world's leading online travel company, moved its corporate headquarters, along with 1,700 employees, to Downtown Bellevue in November 2008. The Expedia move has extended beyond a one-time action given the company's ongoing commitment to the Downtown community and its future success.

**Skyline Award: Bellevue Towers**

Great skylines are symbols of progress, as well as markers of time, taste and a city's trajectory. The 2008 Skyline Award recognizes Bellevue Towers – an ambitious 42 and 43 story luxury condominium project designed by architects at MulvannyG2 and GBD Architects. Bellevue Towers is the tallest residential high-rise development in the Pacific Northwest. The developers have also risen to new heights in sustainable practices that make the building healthier to live in, reduce operating costs and follow best practices in water reclamation and energy conservation. The steps are part of the project's goal to achieve a LEED Gold certification – a first for a large-scale residential project in Bellevue.

**John Boespflug City Builder Award:**

**Suzanne Baugh, Director, Cushman & Wakefield and BDA Board Member**

John Boespflug was an attorney and an exemplary Place Maker, and he served as Bellevue Downtown Association Chair in both 1988 and 1998. After Boespflug's untimely passing in 1999, the BDA dedicated this award to honor significant individual contributions toward advancing Downtown Bellevue as the economic and cultural heart of the Eastside region. Suzanne Baugh, a Bellevue resident and BDA Board Chair in 2002 and 2003, is recognized for her ongoing leadership as a stalwart champion and advocate for Downtown Bellevue and the BDA.

The Bellevue Downtown Association 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration was sponsored by: Davis Wright Tremaine, The Bravern, Washington Federal Savings, First Mutual Bank, GA: Creative, RyanWenzel Events, The Spring District, DCI Engineers, and The Seattle Times.

**About the Bellevue Downtown Association**

Established in 1974, the Bellevue Downtown Association is a nonprofit, membership organization charged with leading the continuing evolution of Downtown Bellevue as the economic and cultural heart of the Eastside. The BDA advocates for a shared vision of Downtown Bellevue, cultivates economic vitality, fosters a dynamic civic and cultural community and creates an open forum for Downtown constituents.