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Bellevue Downtown Association Honors 2011 Place Makers

BELLEVUE, Wash. – The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) announced tonight the winners of the 2011 Place Making Awards at the organization's 38th Annual Celebration. More than 400 business and community leaders attended the event at Meydenbauer Center in downtown Bellevue.

"We salute the legacy of hard work and shared vision fueling our city and its urban center," said Leslie Lloyd, BDA president. "We've seen rapid growth over the past 10 years, and it will take continued focus and leadership from throughout our community to stay competitive and nurture a thriving and livable downtown."

Following the awards program, keynote speaker Christopher B. Leinberger, author, developer, visiting senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and professor of urban and regional planning, discussed about how the convergence of the two largest generations in American history, baby boomers and millennials, is creating a structural shift in demographics and real estate. Both are driving demand for walkable downtowns, which in turn help cities grow their economies and attract residents and jobs.

2011 Place Making Award Winners

Community Treasure: Bellevue LifeSpring and Bellevue Rotary Club

The Community Treasure recognizes the contributions and milestone anniversaries of two long-standing nonprofit organizations. Bellevue LifeSpring, formerly Overlake Service League, celebrated its 100th year of outreach to families and school-age children in Bellevue. The Bellevue Rotary Club marked its 50th year of service and leadership in downtown and the greater community.

Commute Champion: CH2M HILL

CH2M HILL is a major downtown Bellevue employer with a growing number of workers commuting by transit, bicycle, van/car pools, and on foot. The company has strong participation in its commute benefits program, and about 70 percent of CH2M Hill's 300 employees in Bellevue use a non drive-alone travel mode at least once per week.

Deal of the Year: East Link Project Memorandum of Understanding, Sound Transit and City of Bellevue

The Deal of the Year recognizes the East Link Project Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a negotiated agreement between Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue on how voter-approved light rail will serve the city and connect downtown to the region. The MOU outlines a collaborative design process and cost saving measures to afford a downtown tunnel that offers excellent station access while preserving street capacity.

Leadership: Grant Degginger

The Place Making Award for Leadership recognizes former Bellevue City Councilmember Grant Degginger for his 20 years of combined public service to the city in appointed and elected roles, including four as mayor. Degginger has been a strong and consistent voice in support of downtown and its role as the economic and cultural heart of the Eastside.

Opening of the Year: Bellevue Braids Project, Washington State Department of Transportation

The Bellevue Braids Project opened is an high priority interchange improvement called for in downtown and regional plans. Funded by state fuel tax revenues and accelerated by the federal stimulus, the project opened nine months ahead of schedule, and promptly enhanced mobility on I-405 and downtown access with on ramps from the city's new NE 10th Street overpass.

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Place Maker of 2011: Visit Bellevue Washington

Launched in 2011, this initiative created the city's official destination marketing organization and a major campaign platform to attract leisure travelers and convention visitors. Visit Bellevue Washington (VBW) is led by a stakeholder advisory committee and receives support from VBW affiliate members, the Bellevue Convention Center Authority and Meydenbauer Center.

The Bellevue Downtown Association 38th Annual Celebration was sponsored by: The Spring District, Davis Wright Tremaine, Clark Nuber P.S., CH2M HILL, Baylis Architects, KPFF Consulting Engineers, The Bellevue Reporter, GA Creative and Ryan Wenzel Events.

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 and its 240 organizational members advocate for a shared vision of Downtown Bellevue, cultivate economic vitality, foster a dynamic civic and cultural community and create an open forum for all downtown constituents.

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