

# THE CENTER FOR URBAN WATERS

## Urban Waters Groundbreaking Celebration: 'A Transformational Event of Historic Import'

The groundbreaking celebration for the Center for Urban Waters was "a milestone event that will lead to the creation of one of Tacoma's most innovative structures," Tacoma Mayor Bill Baarsma declared as he led off the slate of speakers at the celebration April 15.

About 120 people attended the ceremony at the building site on the east side of the Thea Foss Waterway. The crowd of dignitaries, future tenants, the design and development team, city employees and Tacoma residents gathered underneath a tent set up at the edge of the property to hear how the project grew from an idea to reality.

Looking west toward the fantastic views of downtown, the crowd heard Mayor Baarsma compare the project to other milestone projects in Tacoma's history.

"This is a transformational event of historical import. I would compare this building and the construction of this building to some of the other seminal events in Tacoma's history," he said. Among the milestones he noted were the building of the first hydroelectric dam on the Nisqually River, the decision to build the Click! network, and the siting of the University of Washington Tacoma in a historic section of downtown.

Other speakers included U.S. Representative Norm Dicks, followed by his son David. David is the executive director of the Puget Sound Partnership. Dr. Joel Baker, the Port of Tacoma chair in environmental science and professor, University of Washington Tacoma, spoke about the unique opportunity this building will provide for collaboration among public entities. Jim Waldo, chairman of the Urban Waters board of directors, recounted the timeline of the Center from the initial idea of a waterfront aquarium to a center for marine research and collaboration. Clare Petrich, Port of Tacoma Commissioner and business owner, welcomed the new people and agencies to the neighborhood and to the east side of the Thea Foss.

In the spirit of the mission behind the Center, the groundbreaking ceremony involved water rather than dirt. The guest speakers huddled around a large bowl of dark blue liquid meant to represent dirty water. They poured small vials of clean, clear liquid into the large bowl, and like magic, the dark blue substance transformed to clean, clear water -- a fitting way to conclude the ceremony for a building that will house the brainpower behind cleaning up the waters of the Puget Sound.



The Mayor speaks to the crowd

Courtesy of City of Tacoma



Ceremonial clean-up of the Puget Sound

Courtesy of City of Tacoma



Dignitaries mingle with the crowd

Courtesy of City of Tacoma

## Construction Activity Commences at Site

While the groundbreaking celebration took place on April 15, construction activity actually started March 31. Green Earth Works, the environmental contractor, spent a week remediating a portion of the north end of the site.

Once their work was completed, Turner Construction Company, the general contractor, mobilized on site and full construction commenced. Some of the upcoming construction milestones are:

- Install geo-thermal wells (now through end of June 09)
- Install pile caps and grade beams (now through end of June 09)
- Steel erection (July 09- August 09)
- Finish slab on grade (end of July 09)
- Roof slab pour (August 09)

Turner Construction mounted a camera across from the project site that allows anyone to view the construction progress. To view the activity, go to <http://oxblue.com/pro/login.php>?. The user name is **urbanwaters@tcco.com** and the password is **cuwcam**.

## And the Urban Waters' Artist is . . .

. . . Robert Horner. Horner was selected after the Artist Selection Committee interviewed three individual artists and one artist team. The selection process started with a call to artists issued by the City of Tacoma in November 2008. The response was overwhelming with more than 50 applications received. The Artist Selection Committee reviewed all the applications and created a short-list of four artists to interview.

Horner is currently in the concept stage of design. Following approval of the conceptual design by the Artist Selection Committee late this summer, Horner will finalize his design and prepare construction documents. Construction of the art piece is anticipated for early spring 2010.

## Additional LEED® Point Achieved with Heat Exchanger

The project is still on track to achieve a LEED® Platinum rating. Currently the project anticipates receiving 55 points, three points above the minimum required to achieve Platinum.

One of the additional points came as a result of adding a heat exchanger. With the addition of this heat exchanger, the expected energy savings over a traditional mechanical system is nearly 37 percent. The estimated electrical savings from this hyper-efficient system is more than \$35,000 per year.



Mass excavation nearing completion



Installation of the geo-thermal wells



Laborers work on installing grade beam rebar

## Want To Know More?

### Visit

[www.cityoftacoma.org/urbanwaters](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/urbanwaters)

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