



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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“Our Community at Work” Receives Excellence in Downtown Revitalization Award

OLYMPIA — Port Angeles’s Our Community at Work group was recognized for “Outstanding Achievement in Design” at the 24th Annual Downtown Revitalization Training Institute awards banquet last night in Port Townsend, Wash. The group was recognized for their downtown painting project and was among seven projects honored.

“These award winners represent the hard work taking place across the state to strengthen our downtown communities,” said Rogers Weed, director of the Department of Commerce. “I congratulate them on their dedication and commitment to creating vibrant communities and growing Washington’s economy.”

“The most important thing to come from this project is our own perception of downtown. It now feels more alive, vibrant, and welcoming,” says Barbara Frederick, PADA’s executive director.

At a community forum to discuss the upcoming Hood Canal Bridge closure, a group of Port Angeles citizens decided it would be the perfect time to scrub, paint, and polish downtown to get it ready to welcome back tourists once the new bridge was open.

The group approached the Port Angeles Downtown Association (PADA) about the idea. They, in turn, embraced it, and together set off to make the project a reality. A public meeting was held to garner support and ask for volunteers. Nearly 150 people signed up on the spot. Some offered their time, while others offered money, equipment, and discounts on supplies.

Within weeks of the meeting, 100 high school students descended on downtown to kick off the project and participate in a general cleanup day. The first paint project, one of downtown’s oldest buildings, was started a few days later. As momentum continued to grow, more buildings were identified that needed painting or cleaning. Members of the PADA design committee prepared proposals with the help of a local architect. They then approached property owners. Once approved, each paint project was carefully orchestrated by a volunteer coordinator who managed everything from scheduling workers and equipment to securing supplies.

The result was phenomenal. With initial thoughts of painting 10 buildings, they ended up painting 46! \$13,000 of equipment and supplies were donated by local businesses. Property owners spent more than \$240,000 for roofing materials, awnings, and paint. And, 221 volunteers spent more than 3,300 hours painting during the five month duration of the project.

The Downtown Revitalization Training Institute and the “Excellence in Downtown Revitalization” awards are organized by the Department of Commerce. Commerce is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. For more information, visit www.commerce.wa.gov.

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