

## Exciting times at the Port

BY [JACOB JONES](#) - The Daily World

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With four massive storage tanks looming nearby, government and union officials huddled under a covered truck dock Tuesday to welcome Westway Terminals to the community.

Heavy rain fell around the group of nearly 100 people as Port of Grays Harbor Commissioner Stan Pinnick stepped up to kick off the grand opening.

"It seems just a short time ago in February we were breaking ground," Pinnick said. "We're very proud of what we've accomplished here."



[JACOB JONES](#) | THE DAILY WORLD Port of Grays Harbor, state and city officials joined Westway Terminals representatives Tuesday to celebrate the opening of a new \$20 million liquid bulk storage facility along Port Industrial Road.

New Orleans-based Westway Terminals recently finished building its new \$20 million liquid bulk storage facility along Port Industrial Road just east of Imperium Grays Harbor. Four 80,000-barrel storage tanks stand in a row amid piping and support facilities.

Westway President Scott MacKenzie walked among the officials, local business owners and others at the tractor-trailer transfer station. He shook hands and offered thanks.

"It's exciting times," he said, "that's for sure."

Westway Terminals specializes in storing large amounts of industrial chemicals. The Japan-based Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Co. has leased all four of the new tanks to store methanol, a flammable alcohol or solvent used in many products from plastic to biodiesel.

Many officials offered praise to Westway's willingness to work with the local community as partners. Gov. Chris Gregoire and U.S. Sen. Patty Murray sent letters commemorating the opening.

"Your efforts support business development," Gregoire wrote, "strengthen both the local and state economy, and help keep Washington competitive in an increasingly global marketplace."

State House Majority Leader Lynn Kessler, D-Hoquiam, said securing money to repair the nearby

Marine Terminal 1 proved difficult, but worth the investment in the future.

"I'm so incredibly, incredibly excited about this," she said.

Working together on such investments, she said, will help create a more vibrant community and creates jobs. County Commissioner Al Carter agreed new investment could overcome recent economic setbacks.

"The future looks really bright for us," he said. "I know times are hard now, but it gets better."

Billy Swor, secretary for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 24, joked he had thought the company was making military tanks before realizing they wanted storage tanks.

"We're very grateful and thankful," he said. "We're thankful for any jobs."

Westway Project Manager Rob Johnson explained the storage facility operates like a warehouse, storing without being responsible for transportation.

"It's a simple process that we do here," he said. "We receive product by any mode of transportation and we ship by any mode of transportation that our customer wants."

Johnson said the facility can receive liquid product from ships, trucks or rail before shipping it out any of those ways.

"It's a very clean system that we have in place," he said, noting the facility has many safeguards against spills or harmful vapors.

Port Executive Director Gary Nelson said he expected most of the product to come in by ship and leave by truck or rail as Westway expands its reach on the West Coast.

The Port will collect more than \$200,000 from Westway for its 2010 lease, Nelson said, but much of the potential revenue lies in new vessel calls. The company expects about a dozen calls next year, but that could grow to several a month if additional tanks are built.

"That's the biggest long-term benefit," Nelson said.

Mark Vassar, marketing vice president for Mitsubishi Gas Chemical, thanked all of the partners for helping bring the facility to the Harbor.

"We decided to come here for many reasons," he said. "All of you are those reasons."

Mackenzie praised local officials and the Port of Grays Harbor for making the move easy and working to solve any problems. He said he looks forward to a long working relationship and thanked the nearby cities, mayors and staffs for their hospitality.

"We're celebrating a community," he said. "We're celebrating a partnership."

The officials then took their positions along the length of red ribbon and signed the thin strip. Mackenzie and the others gathered around the large ceremonial scissors, smiled for the photos and cut the ribbon.

The first vessel is due to dock on Dec. 27.

"Everybody has been just absolutely wonderful," Mackenzie said. "We are truly honored to be here."