

**Mayor's column for
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As I was studying the photo on my office wall the other day, my eyes fell upon the oil tanks that for so long were a part of our Edmonds landscape. They've been gone for a few years now and the Union Oil Company of California cleaned that parcel of any contamination and sold it to condominium developers. Once the condos are finished, I guess I'll need a new photo of the site. Side by side they will provide a glimpse of the changing history of Edmonds. The oil tanks were the last remnants of "industry" in Edmonds, and the condos are a reminder that we are indeed a "bedroom community."

UNOCAL, as we have come to know them, has been a part of our community for 85 years. They purchased 110 acres in 1920 and added nine acres in 1944, only to sell nine acres to the Port in 1953. In 1991, they stopped fuel distribution at the site and began cleaning up the site in 1993. Just recently UNOCAL was purchased by Chevron Oil, and the end of UNOCAL is near.

They have been a wonderful neighbor to the City of Edmonds over the years. In 1981 they donated the marsh on their property to the City. It has become a wildlife refuge and habitat. In 1984 they leased property to a group interested in creating a hatchery for \$1 a year. In 2001, they sold Marina Beach on the Edmonds Waterfront to the City for a below-market price. They have reached agreement to sell the lower yard to the Washington State Department of Transportation for the Edmonds Crossing Project (relocation of the ferry terminal). And last week, once again, in a neighborly spirit, they donated the fish hatchery to the City, and we promptly signed a 10-year lease with the hatchery folks, thus preserving that use for the near future.

They have a philanthropic side as well; they donated \$100,000 to the Edmonds Center for the Arts, also known as the remodel of the Puget Sound Christian College, among other names. Showing their leadership, they were first of the big corporations to step up and make a donation.

Just as the face of their land is changing with new ownership, their corporate face is changing as well. They have found ways to allow progress to move forward while preserving portions of their land. UNOCAL will be gone soon, replaced by condos and a multimodal ferry terminal; yet, three things on my photo will not change: the marsh, the hatchery, and Marina Beach will remain community treasures for our children and grandchildren to enjoy in posterity.

Edmonds looks much different today than when UNOCAL came to town 85 years ago. When they leave, they will have made a positive and long-lasting contribution to our community. Change is inevitable and they made the best of it. I thank them for their commitment to the City of Edmonds over the 85 years we have co-existed. Their neighborly spirit is one that we all should emulate.