

SkySong celebration of innovation is a look into future

By Jim Lane and Sharon Harper

A few years of planning and building, the community joined to celebrate a milestone at SkySong, the ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center. On Wednesday, we dedicated the SkySong Plaza and recognized the innovative achievements that have occurred in the year since the center welcomed its first tenants.

The 37-acre site of the former Los Arcos Mall is now a center designed to spur innovation, global business interaction and technology leadership. It is an amenity for Scottsdale.

Greater Phoenix and Arizona, directly connected to Arizona State University's initiatives in innovation, entrepreneurship and global partnerships. More than 40 companies and organizations have established a pres-



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ence at SkySong, creating new technologies, capital networks, business education and a skilled workforce.

SkySong is an example of the tremendous potential in this part of the city. Hard work was

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done to find common goals and mutual benefits in redeveloping this underutilized but strategic property between ASU's main campus in Tempe and Scottsdale's downtown. In addition to the employ-



Steve Duncan (left) and Jim Loyd admire SkySong's shade structure during a dedication ceremony Wednesday in Scottsdale. MICHAEL SNOW/THE REPUBLIC

ment opportunities with innovative companies at SkySong, many jobs were created through the construction of the first phase of the project. The next phase of development is getting under way, and will pump more dollars into the economy.

The SkySong shade structure has become a new landmark for Scottsdale. It can be seen for miles when crossing through the Papago Buttes on McDowell

or driving on Scottsdale Road, and from the air as visitors and business travelers fly into Sky Harbor International Airport.

The native and desert landscape at the site is a welcome change from the acres of asphalt and concrete that formerly existed there.

There are also intangible benefits being realized by the presence of SkySong in south Scottsdale. SkySong has reached

out to partner with local schools through formal and informal programs. ASU SkySong has engaged in several partnerships with the Scottsdale Unified School District. And the development team commemorated the dedication by establishing a grant for a local school program.

Bricks and mortar aside, it is really the people and ideas at SkySong that will make the center vital and will put it on the map. Whether it is a one-person start-up company or a global corporation, new technologies and creative solutions for the future are being explored at SkySong. This is what we really celebrated.

Jim Lane is mayor of Scottsdale. Sharon Harper is president and CEO of Plaza Companies, co-developer of SkySong.