

JOURNAL EDITORIAL

Not all doom and gloom

There's been a lot of bad economic news reported here.

That's the nature of this beast we call journalism — so often the good news seems ordinary and mundane.

But last week a local business person decided to “shake the tree” and point us in an upward direction.

Kathy Geist runs the Mason Transportation Authority's Transit-Community Center, a local clothing business and art co-op and, recently, she's taken to rallying people to the notion that things aren't all that bad in Shelton.

In fact, things are pretty darn good, according to some indicators.

Mason Transit Authority relies on local sales tax for its budget and being privy (OK, it's public information) to such matters, she pointed out to us that sales in our county have been on an upward climb for quite a long while.

Her office provided a chart that shows the most recent month on record (February) as having a 22.9 percent increase in revenue over February 2014.

That means people are spending a lot more money in Mason County than they

did last year.

Were it only one month, you might chalk this up to the adage of lies and statistics, but get this:

Last February's numbers were higher than 2013's numbers. In fact, you have to go back more than two years to find a downward month.

In layman's terms, that means people that spend money in Mason County have been spending more of it for the past 26 months.

The state Office of Financial Management tells us that median household income in the county has been on the rise every year since 2009 and for the past three years it has reached consecutive record highs.

There is no escaping the brutal reality of Simpson Lumber Co. laying off 270 workers, and with them the 500-some families whose jobs depended on Shelton's oldest and greatest economic engine.

Great challenges provide great opportunities and this community is poised, not only to care for its displaced neighbors, but also to prosper with them.