Thank you for coming and celebrating with us. I am Brian Levin-Stankevich, interim president of Eastern Washington University.

As a historian, I am very aware of this historical significance of this day—not only in the life of Eastern Washington University, but for Cheney and the state of Washington. This is our first new academic building since Kingston Hall, built in the 1970s. It is home to our newest baccalaureate degree program in Electrical Engineering—the only regional university in the state to provide this degree. It is home to some of our most innovative programs in design & cyber security. And it is the center of an applied research complex that is unique in the nation—with the new Washington State Patrol Forensic Building and the Washington State Digital Archives Building.

A lot went into creating this structure: 260,000 bricks; 1.3 million pounds of steel; and almost half-a million feet of Ethernet wire. But this building is more than just bricks and mortar. It is home to 35 incredible scholars and researchers, 8 dedicated and talented Eastern staff and more than 2,000 students a day.

As you’ll see in just a short time, this new building not only is a great example of Eastern’s innovative, student-focused history, it really is all about the future. This state-of-the-art building will prepare our students to be successful in careers for the future. It gives EWU greater capacity for distinction as a leader in applied research. And together, our students and research come together to benefit directly the economic health of our region.

Creating this building and the opportunities it holds for the future has been possible only through the support of everyone here. I’d like to especially acknowledge the leadership of our Board of Trustees, represented today by past Chair Gordon Budke and student member, Stacey Roestel.

So many partners have shared in the creation of our building. I want to recognize the support of Congresswomen Cathy McMorris in helping us with more than $1.5 million in federal appropriations. Shan Kelly from her office is with us today.

This day would not be possible without $19 million in state support from the citizens of the State of Washington. We thank our legislators for their leadership and for being here today, including Representative Timm Ormbsy and Lynn Fallows, here today for Representative Don Cox.

Finally, I’d like to introduce our former president, Stephen Jordan and his wife, Ruthie, who traveled from Metropolitan State College of Denver to celebrate this great day with us. Steve, I don’t know if you recall, but way back in 2002 you spoke at a Spokane Valley Chamber meeting about your vision for what this building could be. One of our alums, Julie Prafke, executive director of Humanix, was so inspired, she made the first donation to make this possible. Today, many speeches and many donations later, we want to thank you for your leadership in helping to make this day possible.

Now I’d like to ask the Dean of the College of Science, Health & Engineering, Dr. Ray Soltero, to join me to make a special announcement. We are pleased to announce that The Kresge Foundation has awarded Eastern a prestigious $500,000 Science Initiative challenge grant, one of only 154 organizations in the country to receive a Kresge grant this year. This grant is a strong affirmation of Eastern’s leadership and the impact that this building will have for our students and our region. I’ll let Ray tell you more about the grant and about Eastern’s Technology Initiative for a New Economy.

More information about the Building and the Grand Opening is available at www.ewu.edu/x28955.xml.