



## PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

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For Immediate Release

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### **Portland Parks & Recreation Wins Major National Award Rose City is Tops Nationwide for Gold Medal Honor**

(Portland, OR) –

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) has received the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management from the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) and the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA).

This is PP&R's first Gold Medal Award. The award is the highest honor given by NRPA and AAPRA, the country's leading public park and recreation organizations. Portland was one of only four cities its size nationwide to be nominated for this prestigious recognition. PP&R Director Mike Abbaté was in Atlanta, GA, November 1<sup>st</sup> at the NRPA national conference when the award was announced. He accepted the award on behalf of the citizens of Portland.

Media are invited to a press conference **at City Hall, 11:30am on Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>**, to see the award and interview Portland Parks Commissioner Nick Fish and PP&R Director Mike Abbaté about PP&R's unprecedented honor.

**WHAT: Press conference to unveil PP&R's National Gold Medal Award**

**WHERE: Portland City Hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor**

**WHEN: Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am-12noon**

"This shows how much Portlanders have invested in our parks over the history of the city", says a jubilant Portland Parks Commissioner Nick Fish. "The award-winning parks system we have today is because of the strong legacy of leadership and public support. This national recognition is a tribute to the hard work of Portland Parks & Recreation employees, our partners and dedicated volunteers."

According to the NRPA, the Gold Medal Awards program honors U.S. communities that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.

"This is an unprecedented and humbling national recognition for Portland Parks & Recreation", says PP&R Director Mike Abbaté. "We won this award because of the 150 years of good stewardship. It's now our time to take the reigns and ensure that excellence continues for generations to come."

The Gold Medal Awards program separates award candidates into five categories, based on community population. Four finalists are chosen from each category. The Rose City falls into AAPRA's "Class I" (the largest division) which includes all U.S. parks and recreation departments serving populations of 250,000 or more.

PP&R's selection as the award recipient was announced during the NRPA's Annual Congress & Exposition in Atlanta. The event runs from today through November 3rd, 2011.

The other Class I finalists included Mecklenburg County (NC) Parks and Recreation Department; Miami-Dade County (FL) Park and Recreation Department; and Kansas City (MO) Parks.

According to the 2010 City Auditor's independent **Annual Resident Survey**, 86% of Portlanders indicate the overall quality of parks in Portland as "Very Good" or "Good".

Portland's park system began in 1852, when the city's first parks were acquired from William W. Chapman and Daniel H. Lowndale, and consisted of what we now call the Plaza Blocks and two of the South Park Blocks. Since that time, Portland residents have planned, protected, and treasured their parks, natural areas, and places of recreation.

For more information, call 503-823-5300 or visit [portlandparks.org](http://portlandparks.org).

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Nick Fish, Commissioner | Mike Abbaté, Director