



MEDIA RELEASE

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REI, ODOT & Former Mayor Sam Adams Receive Awards at Friends of Trees Annual Luncheon on May 16

The nonprofit's awards are for business, community partner, and individual leadership

At its annual leadership luncheon yesterday, Friends of Trees presented its 2013 leadership awards to REI, the Oregon Department of Transportation, and former Portland Mayor Sam Adams. The awards recognize outstanding leaders in supporting and advancing the work of community tree planting and green space restoration in Northwest cities.

The largest consumer co-op in the nation, REI received Friends of Trees' 2013 Business Leadership Award. Founded in the Northwest and committed to helping the communities where its stores are located, REI Portland and REI Eugene have generously supported Friends of Trees for 15 years now—in both the Portland and Eugene areas. To date, REI has donated more than \$60,000 for Friends of Trees' planting projects. Recently REI pledged another \$20,000 in support for the nonprofit's planting projects this fall and winter.

"Friends of Trees has been one of our strongest partners," said Stephen Hatfield, Outdoor Marketing & Outreach Marketing Manager for REI Portland. Its strengths, he noted, are an unwavering devotion to environmental stewardship and a critical role in restoration work throughout the region.

ODOT Region 1 received Friends of Trees' 2013 Community Partner Leadership Award for its innovative four-year project with Friends of Trees, Metro, and more than a dozen other businesses, foundations and agencies to plant 5,000 trees along 16.5 miles of the I-205 multi-use path. The project called for a new approach to funding tree plantings in which trees are considered capital assets. However, unlike other capital assets such as light posts and bridges, trees increase in value over time.

"The best part of the project is that as the trees grow and more and more people use the path, they're going to reap all the benefits of the trees we planted," said ODOT Region 1 Manager Jason Tell.

Friends of Trees' 2013 Individual Leadership Award went to former Mayor Sam Adams, currently Executive Director of the City Club of Portland. Adams received the award for his

leadership in launching the Grey to Green Initiative, a years-long project to plant green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff in Portland so less grey infrastructure is required.

Lisa Libby, the city's Planning & Sustainability Director during Adams' terms as city commissioner and mayor, accepted the award on behalf of Adams, who was unable to attend the luncheon because of a close friend's death. Libby said that from the time she started working for Adams, he talked about the need to reduce carbon emissions and manage stormwater sustainably.

"The investment part is what makes this such a notable recognition," said Libby. "Sam's willingness to make that investment ... and to dedicate public resources to it."

The event was sponsored by The Oregonian and Rigert Shade Trees, with KGW Anchor Tracy Barry as emcee. Special guest speaker Mayor Charlie Hales concluded the program. A former board member of Friends of Trees, Hales and his family have been planting with Friends of Trees for 20 years now.

When he greets volunteers at Friends of Trees plantings, Hales said, "I always admonish them that planting with Friends of Trees might cause three side effects."

The first is that after the community planting, they'll start talking with their neighbors. Secondly, they might start speaking strangely, using Latin names when admiring the trees they've planted. Finally, Hales warns the volunteers, "You'll start developing this belief that you can make a difference."

Since its founding in 1989, Friends of Trees has led community volunteers in planting a half million trees and native plants in the Portland-Vancouver and Eugene-Springfield metro areas. To join Friends of Trees or learn more, visit www.FriendsofTrees.org.

Photo of Stephen Hatfield, Outdoor Marketing & Outreach Marketing Manager, REI Portland; Lisa Libby, former Portland Planning & Sustainability Director; Scott Fogarty, Friends of Trees Executive Director; Tracy Barry, KGW News Anchor; and Jason Tell, ODOT Region 1 Manager, taken by Lucia DeLisa.