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2015 Finalists Announced for the National Gold Medal Awards in Parks and Recreation

AAPRA and NRPA select agencies to compete for prestigious honor in the park and recreation field

ASHBURN, VA., May 27, 2015 – The [American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration](#) (AAPRA), in partnership with the [National Recreation and Park Association](#) (NRPA), is pleased to announce the finalists for the 2015 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. This year's proud sponsor of the Gold Medal Awards program is Musco Lighting LLC.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary with NRPA and founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Awards program honors communities in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition. Applications are separated into seven classes, with five classes based on population, one class for armed forces recreation and one class for state park systems awarded on odd numbered years.

Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials. Four finalists in each class are chosen to compete for grand honors each year.

This year, one of the finalists, Park District of Oak Park in Oak Park, IL, won a Gold Medal in 1966—the first year the awards were given. The 2015 Gold Medal finalists are:

Class I (population 400,001 and over)

- Cleveland Metroparks — Cleveland, OH
- Kansas City Parks and Recreation — Kansas City, MO
- Mesa Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities — Mesa, AZ
- The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission — Riverdale, MD

Class II (population 150,001 – 400,000)

- City of Peoria — Peoria, AZ
- Des Moines Parks and Recreation — Des Moines, IA
- Fox Valley Park District — Aurora, IL
- Plano Parks and Recreation — Plano, TX

Class III (population 75,001 – 150,000)

- City of Allen Parks and Recreation — Allen, TX
- Lawrence Parks and Recreation — Lawrence, KS

- Roswell Recreation, Parks, Historic and Cultural Affairs — Roswell, GA
- St. George Leisure Services — St. George, UT

Class IV (population 30,001 – 75,000)

- City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation and Forestry — Eau Claire, WI
- City of Englewood Parks and Recreation — Englewood, CO
- Loveland Parks and Recreation — Loveland, CO
- Park District of Oak Park — Oak Park, IL

Class V (population less than 30,000)

- Itasca Park District — Itasca, IL
- Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry — Middleton, WI
- Oak Brook Park District — Oak Brook, IL
- Williston Parks and Recreation District — Williston, ND

Armed Forces Recreation

- Command Fleet Activities Yokosuka — Japan
- MCB Camp Pendleton — Camp Pendleton, CA
- Naval Air Station Pensacola — Pensacola, FL
- Portsmouth Naval Shipyard — Kittery, ME

State Park Systems

- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control — Dover, DE
- Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division — Stockbridge, GA
- Missouri State Parks — Jefferson City, MO
- Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails — Cheyenne, WY

A panel of five park and recreation professionals reviews and judges all application materials. Judges are chosen for their considerable experience and knowledge in parks and recreation on both the local and national levels.

This year's finalists will compete for Grand Plaque Award honors this summer, and the seven Grand Plaque recipients will be announced live during the Opening General Session at the 2015 NRPA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV, Sept. 15-17.

For more information on the Gold Medal Awards, visit www.nrpa.org/goldmedal or www.aapra.org.

The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration is a non-profit organization founded to advance knowledge related to the administration of recreation and parks; to encourage scholarly efforts by both practitioners and educators that would enhance the practice of park and recreation administration; to promote broader public understanding of the importance of parks and recreation to the public good; and, to conduct research, publish scholarly papers and sponsor seminars related to the advancement of park and recreation administration. For more information, visit www.aapra.org.

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 50,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit NRPA.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit ParksAndRecreation.org.

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