Awards of Excellence

Celebrate Parks & Recreation!
The 2019 OPRA Annual Awards of Excellence will be presented during the 2020 OPRA Conference at the Kalahari Convention Center in Sandusky, Ohio on February 4, 2020 at 6:30pm!

Recognizing the Best: The OPRA Governor’s Award

The OPRA Governor’s Award recognizes the one award from all of the first place winners, that has made the most significant impact in the lives of Ohioans. The award winner will be announced by the Governor of Ohio or his designee during the awards ceremony. A $500 donation is awarded to the winning parks or recreation foundation. State leaders will serve as the judging panel for the award with the following criteria:

- Project or program is impactful on community quality of life
- Project or program is unique/innovative, or presents a new way of doing something
- Project or program addresses a need recognized in the community
- Project or program is utilized by the community

Why Submit an Application for the OPRA Awards of Excellence:

- Display how your agency is improving the quality of life in your community;
- Earn your agency acknowledgement;
- Demonstrate the caliber of your organization’s work;
- Showcase your organization’s talents and dedication to the parks and recreation profession;
- Increase marketability, media access; and
- Receive recognition in the parks and recreation profession!

The OPRA Annual Awards of Excellence recognize organizations throughout Ohio that embody the vision, dedication and demonstration of excellence in parks and recreation. These awards highlight the efforts of those organizations that transcend everyday standards to make a difference and improve the quality of life in our Ohio communities.
Awards of Excellence Categories

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS
Recognizing excellence in projects and programs that enrich the quality of life and strengthen Ohio communities.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
Development or redevelopment of parks or facilities that advances the goals of parks and recreation agencies.

Cat. 1 - Up to $1.0 Million
Cat. 2 - $1.0 Million to $2.5 Million
Cat. 3 - $2.5 Million and Up

PROGRAMS
Recognizing parks and recreation agencies that are progressively providing enjoyable, enriching and engaging experiences for their communities.

Cat. 4 Special Event
A single or multiple day event or series organized around a single theme.

Cat. 5 Historical & Cultural Arts
Historical reenactments, celebrations, fine arts or similar programs of a cultural nature.

Cat. 6 Environmental & Interpretive
Programs focused on nature; including environmental awareness, natural interpretation or conservation.

Cat. 7 Health & Wellness
Focus on healthy lifestyles for community health or employee wellness.

Cat. 8 Sports
Youth or adult sports programs or events that improve the community.

Cat. 9 Adaptive
Programs that enhance the lives of those with special needs such as emotional, cognitive or physical disabilities.

Cat. 10 Recreation
General programs that highlight innovative or unique takes on recreation programming.

Cat. 11 Law Enforcement
Exemplifies innovative training, public programs, special units or constructive plans that have significantly and positively improved law enforcement operations.

Cat. 12 Natural Resources & Conservation
Sustainable, significant contributions of an agency toward long-range planning and quality of services within the area of park facilities and natural resource acquisitions/development, and positively impacting Ohio’s environment.

Cat. 13 Marketing Innovation
New or unique ways to communicate programs, stories and/or benefits of parks and recreation that keep communities up-to-date and informed. Entrant must manage projects, with outside assistance limited to support functions such as typesetting, printing, technical and production services.

Cat. 14 Management Innovation
Noteworthy contributions to parks and recreation through inspiration, incentive and leadership opportunities; excellence in management, education and staff development.

Get Involved in the Judging Process
The project and program submissions will be judged by parks and recreation professionals from around Ohio. The top three (3) scorers in each category will receive awards. Ties will be broken by the Awards Committee.

Judging will take place beginning at 10am, Friday, November 1, 2019 in Dublin, Ohio.

Award notification with media release will be sent to winning agencies the week of November 11, 2019.

All entries will receive a summary of the judging sheet and comments. Additionally, all submissions will be available for viewing by members on the OPRA website.
Outstanding Leadership Awards

Recognizing outstanding leaders who have advanced the benefits of parks and recreation in Ohio. No entry fee. Awards in the Outstanding Leadership Categories are voted on by the OPRA Board of Directors. Award notification will be sent the week of December 2, 2019.

Describe the primary reason this person is being nominated for a Leadership Award and explain how the nominee has enhanced parks, recreation and quality of life in your community and/or Ohio.

**Cat. 15 Outstanding Youth Leadership**
Presented to an outstanding leader 12-18 years of age who has enhanced parks and recreation in their community or Ohio.

**Cat. 16 Outstanding Citizen**
Recognizing an outstanding citizen, volunteer or community board member who has enhanced parks and recreation in their community and/or Ohio.

**Cat. 17 Youth Sports Coach of the Year**
Recognizing an outstanding youth sports coach who has positively affected youth sports and has served as a role model for athletes in their community and/or Ohio.

**Cat. 18. Jack Hanna Resource Conservation**
Presented to an OPRA member who has dedicated his or her career to the conservation of natural resources as exhibited by leadership in conservation both in their career in parks and recreation and in other efforts.

**Cat. 19 Legislator of the Year**
Presented to an outstanding elected official who has advanced the cause of parks and recreation in Ohio.

**Cat. 20 Harvey Woods Lifetime Achievement**
Harvey Woods served as a parks and recreation professional not only in his day-to-day tasks, but also by mentoring young professionals and serving OPRA and NRPA. This award is presented to an outstanding individual who has emulated this work, with a minimum of 30 years of service within parks and recreation in Ohio.

**Cat. 21 Professional of the Year**
Presented to an OPRA member who has served a minimum of 15 years in the field of parks and recreation and has provided outstanding service to his/her community and OPRA.

**Cat. 22 OPRA Hall of Fame**
The Hall of Fame is the highest award given by OPRA. Hall of Fame inductees will have made a significant statewide contribution to parks, recreation and natural resources which is demonstrated through specific and tangible accomplishments over the course of the individual’s career. Nominations should detail those statewide contributions and accomplishments. The nominees must have been retired for at least two years. The retired professional must have been an active member of OPRA for at least 20 years; 10 or more years for citizen board members. Up to two (2) recipients may be selected.

Please provide a detailed explanation of why the individual deserves this award as well as a summary of the contributions impacting parks, recreation and natural resources in Ohio at the local, state and/or national level.

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For More Information
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1. Community Impact
The project or program addresses a community need, provides broad community benefit and generally serves to improve the quality of life of the people in the community.

2. Achievement
The project or program achieves stated goals in a measurable way.

3. Innovation
The project or program is innovative, creative, presents a new way of doing things, is new to the field of parks and recreation and provides a model which can be replicated.

4. Execution
The project or program is strategic, utilizing specific strategies, tools, resources, engagement and outreach in order to accomplish goals.

5. Sustainability
The project or program is sustainable and/or provides sustainable benefits to the community.

6. Resourcefulness
The project or program creatively uses available resources including community partnerships, sponsorships, grants and volunteers.

7. Storytelling
The project or program utilizes available resources to clearly articulate the benefits of the project or program to the community. The application materials clearly describe the project or program and its benefits.

Please complete the entire application. An incomplete response will be scored accordingly.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (CAT. 1-14)

Supporting documents will be submitted after your application is received. Instructions will be emailed to the primary contact no later than two business days once the submission has been received.

There is a limit of twelve (12) supporting documents per submission, with at least six (6) of the supporting documents being JPEG files. (One document per PDF and one image per JPEG, please no captions, borders, etc.) Photographs are to be submitted as 300 dpi JPEG files. Examples of PDF documents include flyers, posters, brochures, plans, calendars or newspaper articles. PDF’s need to be saved as low res documents. Video links (youtube or vimeo) need to be submitted at the time of the awards submission to be considered and will count toward your total supporting documents.

By submitting an application, you are granting OPRA permission to use any and all portions of the application, including photos, on our website and in marketing materials.

RULES

Submission Deadline: October 16, 2019

Supporting Documents Deadline: October 18, 2019

Cost is $60 per submission. Group members will receive one free submission; use discount code at check-out.

Projects/Programs must be completed between October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019.

Applications must be submitted by a current OPRA member or staff of an agency with a Group Membership.

Projects/Programs can only be submitted in one category.

Submissions are not permitted to be entered two years in a row.

The Awards Committee reserves the right to reassign applications to the most appropriate category.

All submissions are submitted online at www.opraonline.org.

Video links must be submitted with the application. All other supporting materials will be submitted after the application has been received. Please allow two business days to receive instructions on how to submit your supporting materials.

Keep a copy of your submission. There are templates found on the awards homepage to help you prepare your submission before submitting it online.