Awards of Excellence

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.

Celebrate Parks & Recreation!
The 2020 OPRA Annual Awards of Excellence will be presented during the 2021 OPRA Conference at the Kalahari Convention Center in Sandusky, Ohio on April 28, 2021 at 6:30pm!

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!

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, program or event is impactful on community quality of life
• Project, program or event is unique/innovative, or presents a new way of doing something
• Project, program or event addresses a need recognized in the community
• Project, program or event is utilized by the community
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 November 30, 2020.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

Public Official of the Year
Presented to an outstanding elected official who has advanced the cause of parks and recreation in Ohio.

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.

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.

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.

For More Information
Ohio Parks and Recreation Association
614.895.2222 | opra@opraonline.org
Amanda Gehres, Awards Co-Chair
Grove City Parks and Recreation
614.277.3064
agehres@grovecityohio.gov
Kevin Swanson, Awards Co-Chair
Miami County Park District
937.335.6273
kswanson@miamicountyparks.com
Awards of Excellence Categories

Recognizing excellence in projects, programs and events that enrich the quality of life and strengthen Ohio communities.

PROJECTS

Capital Improvement Projects
Development or redevelopment of parks or facilities that advance 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

Cat. 4 Management Innovation
Noteworthy contributions to parks and recreation through inspiration, incentive and leadership initiatives; excellence in management, education and staff development.

Cat. 5 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 printing, technical and production services.

Cat. 6 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 which positively impact Ohio’s environment.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

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

Cat. 7 Adaptive
Programs or events that enhance the lives of those with special needs such as emotional, cognitive or physical disabilities.

Cat. 8 Environmental & Interpretive
Programs or events focused on nature; including environmental awareness, natural interpretation or conservation.

Cat. 9 Health & Wellness
Programs or events focused on healthy lifestyles for community health or employee wellness.

Cat. 10 Historical & Cultural Arts
Historical reenactments, celebrations, fine arts or similar programs of a cultural nature.

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

Cat. 13 Sports
Youth or adult sports programs or events that improve the community.

RULES

Submission Deadline: October 14, 2020
Supporting Documents Deadline: October 16, 2020

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

Projects, programs or events must be completed between October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020. For capital improvement projects, please use the date of your grand opening. For ongoing programs, please use the date of the last completed program or session within the above time period. For events, use the event date.

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

Projects, programs or events 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.

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

FOR PROJECTS, PROGRAMS & EVENTS (Cat. 1-13)

When applying online, please be prepared with the following information:
1. Award Category
2. Project/Program/Event Name
3. Date Completed
4. Cost of Project (Cat. 1-3 Only)
5. A narrative description of the project, program or event (not to exceed 1000 words) which addresses the following:

1. **Community Impact**
The project, program or event 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, program or event achieves stated goals in a measurable way.

3. **Innovation**
The project, program or event 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, program or event is strategic, utilizing specific strategies, tools, resources, engagement and outreach in order to accomplish goals.

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

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

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

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

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (CAT. 1-13)**

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 high resolution JPEG files. Examples of PDF documents include flyers, posters, brochures, plans, calendars or newspaper articles. PDFs need to be saved as low res documents. All files and images need to be less than 6MB each. Website and video links (ex. 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.

**GET INVOLVED IN THE JUDGING PROCESS!**

The project, program and event 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 be virtual and take place on October 29, 2020.

Award notification with media release will be sent to winning agencies the week of November 9, 2020.

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