Portland to celebrate 24th National Night Out Tuesday

Applebee’s hosts kickoff
Sun, laughter, and food were part of the NNO Count-down Party hosted by Applebee’s at the Lloyd Center Tuesday evening, one week prior to the official NNO parties that will be celebrated around town Aug. 1. Mayor Tom Potter, Crime Prevention Special Event Coordinator William Warren and Interim Crime Prevention Program Manager Stephanie Reynolds greet the near 200 folks who attended the event.

PHOTOS BY NELL WAGENAAR

Plenty to eat and drink!
Applebee’s provided fruit, veggies, ribs, chicken and drinks. Crime Prevention Coordinators Galina Grigoryan and Rosanne Lee grab a bite. At right is Police Chief Rosie Sizer who stressed that the NNO event is a prime example of people getting involved in community policing.
One of ONI’s signature events

Close to 17,000 expected to participate

By Nell Wagenaar

The clock is ticking. The countdown has begun. Only three more days until the official National Night Out is again celebrated throughout Portland neighborhoods, parks and streets. This will be the 24th year our city has participated in this national public safety awareness event expected to draw nearly 17,000 people.

The basic premise: get neighbors to come out and talk to each other about keeping their neighborhoods safe—usually around potlucks and barbecues, sometimes with music and activities for the kids, visits from police and fire.

“This is shaping up to be a great year for National Night Out! We closed registration last week and 182 parties are registered,” reported Stephanie Reynolds, interim crime prevention manager. That’s 20 more parties and 5,000 more people than last year so it could turn out to be a record year.

ONI Director Amalia Alarcón urges folks to come celebrate NNO and the fact that Portland is a safe city. In some cities in Ecuador, where she visited family recently, people have bars on their windows, she said.
This year the 5-6 p.m. kick-off party at Applebee’s Grill and Bar, 1439 NE Halsey, was scheduled a week earlier than usual.

“In past years we’ve held the kick-off event the same night as National Night Out. We realized that this was a conflict for many of the party-givers that wanted to attend the kick-off but couldn’t because they were in the midst of final arrangements for their neighborhood celebration,” said Reynolds.

Other NNO partners who helped organize and prepare for the city-wide celebration include the neighborhood Coalition offices, Portland Police Bureau, Portland Fire and Rescue, Portland Office of Emergency Management (POEM), Parks, BES, Transportation, the Noise Control Office, and Oregon Trail Chapter. KINK’s family of radio stations, another sponsor, provided free beer steins, shirts, movie tickets, stickers, CDs, DVDs, and concert tickets to Red Hot Chili Peppers.
Guest speakers included the Mayor, ONI Director Amalia Alarcón, Portland Police Chief Rosie Sizer, Portland’s Fire and Rescue Chief Dave Sprando, and Shawn Graff, POEM director. Joining in the Countdown festivities were the Crime Prevention Coordinators and staff and POEM volunteers. “It is truly a team effort with city bureaus working with business and community partners,” said Reynolds.

“This is a unique crime prevention event that celebrates and promotes our City's community policing and public safety efforts,” said Mayor Potter. Please encourage your neighbors, friends and family to participate locally in this national event. I hope you will find the time to connect with your neighborhoods on August 1st.
Teamwork is a key ingredient as National Night Out takes a massive planning effort by the Crime Prevention team, interns, city bureaus, neighborhood offices and NET and other volunteers. In near 100-degree heat last week Monday, a group of volunteers came to the East Precinct Office and helped stuff 10,000 Community Safety Kits for distribution to all partygoers tomorrow. They started at 9 a.m. and stuffed plastic bags with brochures and other public safety information until 7:30 that night, breaking only for lunch and short stretches.

‘This is a unique event that celebrates our City’s community policing and public safety efforts... ’  
MAYOR POTTER

The concept started in Boston 23 years ago when folks were urged to turn on their porch lights the first Tuesday in August to bring crime prevention awareness to neighborhoods. It has grown with cities across the nation holding events.

Neighborhood parties in Portland can be small and intimate with a handful of neighbors getting together to share food. Or they can be large with musical entertainment, parades, games and events for the kids. The Fernhill park gathering last year drew nearly 400 folks. Since some prefer to have their NNO party on a weekend, ONI registers parties happening from one week before to one week after the official date of the first Tuesday. Most of the parties will happen on August 1st, but about 20% will happen on a different date within that one-week time frame.

Kids like the parties because many of them are visited by Police Officers, sometimes with the Canine Unit, and Fire Fighters with their flashy trucks and equipment. This year there will be some giveaways. Adults will be getting refrigerator magnets with emergency phone numbers and the kids will be getting temporary tattoos—a colorful red heart topped by a white rose surrounded by a banner spelling: Portland. So, have fun. Be safe!

William under glass

Crime Prevention staff William Warren and Nell Wagenaar last week installed a NNO display with photos of years past in the Portland Building lobby display case to promote the event. A similar one is on display at the Police Bureau.
Bringing the NNO event to life each year
The Crime Prevention team from left to right this year is: Walter Garcia, Tom Peavey, Katherine Anderson, Michael Boyer, Celeste Carey, Stephanie Reynolds, Teri Poppino, Nell Wagenaar, William Warren, Galina Grigoryan, Rosanne Lee and Havilah Ferschweiler. Not pictured is Travis Koopman who provided much valued administrative and technical support.

Do you know your city?
This month, in keeping with our community safety theme, we’ll see if you know some neighborhood trivia and some facts about the Police Bureau.

1. In 1908 this Portland woman became the first female police officer in the U.S. What was her name?
2. Mayor Bud Clark appointed the first female police chief in a major US city. Who was she?
3. In what year did City Council formally recognize the city’s neighborhood system by establishing a city bureau, the Office of Neighborhood Associations?

The first person to correctly respond by emailing the Trivia Guru at jdutt@ci.portland.or.us will be crowned our monthly winner. At the end of the year we will have a final showdown of our monthly winners to determine the grand prizewinner and the ONI Portland Trivia champ.

The Other Side of the Fence
The Other side of the Fence is a monthly newsletter published by the City of Portland’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement. If you have questions or story ideas, please contact Nell Wagenaar, editor, at 503-823-4064 or email nwagenaar@ci.portland.or.us