

December 30, 2009

Dear Friends,

What will we remember about 2009?

I will look back on a year when we came together to meet unprecedented challenges. In a year when Oregon ranked in the top five nationally in hunger, homelessness, and unemployment, Portlanders didn't just hunker down to ride out the crisis. We worked harder to reach out to others in need.

This holiday season marks my second in office. Last December, we [faced historic winter storms](#) that were life-threatening to many of our city's homeless. Thanks to a strong City-County partnership, incredible support from the non-profit and faith communities, and record-setting volunteering, we got through the crisis safely. This year, we [strengthened](#) our first comprehensive emergency management plan and we are prepared for whatever weather may arrive.

Together, we rallied to save the free and family-friendly Washington Park Summer Festival; helped the parents, teachers and children of fire-damaged Marysville Elementary [find a new home](#); volunteered more than ever before to support local non-profits; and [replanted](#) a vandalized community garden. This summer, County Commissioner Cogen and I sponsored [ReUse Week](#), shining a light on reuse organizations. Portlanders responded generously with donations.

As a City Council, my colleagues and I tackled a number of challenging issues. We [streamlined the permitting process](#) to facilitate job creation; saved taxpayer money with a [lower-cost water treatment strategy](#); established a [Climate Action Plan](#) to keep Portland on the forefront of environmental responsibility; and prioritized spending on public safety, small businesses, and families in need. We adopted the Mayor's [5-Year Economic Development Strategy](#), which aims to create 10,000 new jobs in the next five years. And when people needed it most, we maintained the safety net for our most vulnerable.

I am privileged to serve as Commissioner-in-Charge for [Housing](#) and [Parks and Recreation](#). In 2009, we made steady progress.

A milestone year for the Portland Housing Bureau:

- We [launched the new Portland Housing Bureau](#) and welcomed Margaret Van Vliet as its first Director.
- We broke ground on the [Resource Access Center](#), a one-stop center that will provide services, counseling, and housing for the homeless.

- In the worst economy of my lifetime, when most City bureaus took 5% cuts, the City Council not only preserved the budget for housing, we [increased it by 30%](#).

The Portland Housing Bureau works to make sure every Portlander has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. In the next year, my team and I will focus on developing new resources to meet the growing need for housing, closing the minority homeownership gap, and preserving existing affordable housing.

Significant achievements at the Bureau of Parks and Recreation:

- We opened a LEED Platinum swimming pool in East Portland and a new park space in downtown, [Director Park](#).
- We [protected Ross Island](#) by [creating](#) a no-wake zone in the lagoon.
- [With our community partners](#), we stopped the proposal to build a minor league baseball stadium in Lents Park.

I am committed to ensuring that every person in our community has access to parks, trails and natural areas. In 2010, I am excited to move forward with a number of projects: a [Master Plan](#) for Lents Park; [increased opportunities](#) for off-road cycling and natural area restoration in Forest Park; opening [Caruthers Park](#) in South Waterfront; expanding our [Community Gardens program](#); and designating the [Halprin Open Space Sequence](#) a National Historic Landmark.

It is an honor to serve as your City Commissioner. Working together, we can continue to make a positive difference in people's lives.

My staff and I wish you a healthy and happy New Year!

Nick