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PRESS RELEASE

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City Board Members and Staff Win Parks and Recreation Awards

Two Parks and Recreation Board members and Missoula Parks and Recreation's aquatics supervisor were honored last month by the Montana Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) for their outstanding contributions to the parks and recreation field.

MRPA President Kory Thomson of Billings presented the "MRPA Citation Of Merit" to volunteer board members Dale Harris and John O'Connor and the "MRPA Professional of the Year" award to Aquatics Supervisor Eric Seagrave on September 27 during the group's annual awards banquet at the Holiday Inn.

City Parks and Recreation Board chair Dale Harris was recognized for service to the board since 2001 and his efforts to help garner federal support for local parks, trails and open space projects. Board member John O'Connor was cited for his commitment to promoting park development here in Missoula and for his service as chair of Friends of Missoula Parks, a non-profit group which supports local parks projects.

Parks and Recreation Aquatics Supervisor Eric Seagrave, who has been with the City of Missoula since 2005, won the "Professional of the Year" award for his leadership at Splash Montana and Currents Aquatics Center. Seagrave was at the helm when both waterparks opened in 2006, and under his leadership both facilities have posted exceptional earnings while keeping a tight rein on operating expenses. He was lauded for his commitment to safety and staff training, to "green" operating principles, and for his willingness to lend his aquatics and safety expertise to other Montana agencies.

Missoula Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler says she's delighted to see her colleagues' hard work recognized by the MRPA. "I am honored to work with outstanding employees and incredibly dedicated volunteers. Their ongoing efforts to make Missoula a better, healthier, more vital community are exemplary." Gaukler says her staff and volunteer board members are continually motivated by Missoula's overwhelming support for parks, recreation, trails and open space.

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