

Volunteers make Portland great

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PORTLAND, Mich. — Portland Main Street committees met Thursday to show that it's the work and time of the volunteers that help make Portland's Main Street and downtown flourish.

During the event, each committee honored an outstanding volunteer who has gone above and beyond what was expected. Also honored, was a Volunteer of the Year for all committees, and a Horizon Award was presented for the best new volunteer.

The Volunteer of the Year award was given to Wanda Urie, for her hard work and dedication for the past several years as chairperson for the Promotions and Marketing Committee.

"Downtown Portland would not be what it is today without Wanda Urie," said Organization and Finance Committee Chairperson and Portland City Mayor Pro tem Julie Clement.

Urie will be stepping down as chairperson, but will still sit on the committee.

Winner of the Horizon Award is Nicole Sunstrum, who will be Chair of the Promotions and Marketing Committee.

"Once in a while, a volunteer comes around that is too good to be true," said Clement. "(Sunstrum) goes above and beyond what is expected."

The winner for the Organization and Finance Committee is Paige Patterson, for her work with utilizing social networks like Facebook to get information out to the public about events and updates. Winner of the Economic Revitalization is Bernie Pelc for work with the revitalization of the opera house, and winner of the Design Committee is Portland City Manager Tom Dempsey for taking time out of his schedule to volunteer and give his professional input. Clement was presented with the Manager's Award, which was given by Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan.

"This is your community, and this is your downtown," said Keynote speaker Jamie Schriener-Hooper, who is the Organizational Specialist at Michigan State Housing Development Authority. "You are doing wonderful things, and amazing things (here in Portland)."

Schriener-Hooper explained to the crowd that volunteers are important to every downtown, and that without their help behind the scenes, much would not be done.

"You know it's you, the volunteers, that make this happen," said Schriener-Hooper about the success of Downtown Portland with new businesses coming, and creating memories for families and community members.

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