

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

## NEWS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release, Monday, Dec. 7, 2015*

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### **NDPRD presents Cal Renner Award of Excellence, Special Merit and Merit awards**

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) presented its Merit, Special Merit and Cal Renner Award of Excellence during its All Staff meeting held Dec. 2-4.

The Cal Renner Award of Excellence is the department's highest award named after Cal Renner, the NDPRD's carpenter whose commitment to excellence year in and year out, combined with his ability to work with a variety of individuals, employees and volunteers set an outstanding example for excellence.

**The 2015 Cal Renner Award winner is North Eastern North Dakota Heritage Association (NENDHA).** The NENDHA has been a part of Icelandic State Park over parts of the last four decades. The organization is a driving force in interpreting and preserving the ethnic heritage of northeast North Dakota.

The Special Merit awards are presented to those people and organizations outside the NDPRD who go "above and beyond" in their support of the agency and its objectives. This year's Special Merit Award winners are:

**The JakeStar Foundation** is recognized for its extraordinary effort in Off-Highway Vehicle safety certifications. For three years the Foundation has sponsored the OHV safety simulator in LaMoure and Oakes, ND. This year JakeStar sponsored every OHV course conducted by North Dakota Parks and Recreation. The organization paid for the certification of over 200 kids.

**Cashman Nursery** was recognized not only for their work in helping ND Parks and Recreation with providing the required trees and shrubs needed for the Department's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tree Plantings, but also for the outstanding business relationship with the Department throughout the years.

**Cloverdale Foods** is honored for its instrumental partnership in the success of the department's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. Cloverdale foods provided at no charge, thousands of hot dogs, brats, and all the paper products needed to serve them at every celebration across the state.

**Sara Lee Bimbo Bakeries** consistently went out of their way week after week this summer to make sure the buns were fresh and available. Even through the numerous changes in preorders, Store Manager Kelly Roberts accommodated the ND Parks and Recreation Department by opening the store early and providing high quality products with an enormous smile and excellent customer service.

**Pride Dairy** topped off the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations throughout all state parks by not only donating 100 percent of his product, Smore's Ice Cream, but also by creating an ice cream flavor specifically for the ND Parks and Recreation 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Old Dutch Foods** is recognized for its commitment to providing single serve packages of potato chips for all 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in every state park, the majority of which was donated.

**Lawrence Gapp II**, who is a member of the US Customs & Border Protection's Honor Guard, took it upon himself, while working through his chain of command, to gain approval from the US Customs & Border Patrol to travel, using their own funding and equipment, and to solely train the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department Honor Guard.

**The Mandan Lions Club and its members Kevin Vannett, Jeff Erickson and Bill Schott** for their part in initiating a campaign to purchase a "people mover" trailer and for the transfer of ownership of the trailer to Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. This transportation enhancement for park campers and day visitors has proven to be a popular and much appreciated service.

**The Duttenhefner Family** embodies the volunteer spirit through their assistance at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. Over 100 volunteer hours have been logged by Darryl, Kathy, Robyn, Jessa, Jessica, and Kassidy in helping with Haunted Fort, monthly hikes, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tree Planting, and natural disasters. In the aftermath of destructive wind storms this year, the entire family immediately worked with park staff in checking all campers, taking reports, and helping to remove downed trees, as well as feeding all park staff working the recovery.

After the devastating fire at Cross Ranch left Park Manager Eric Lang and his family with very little, Kristen Olson, Laura Gardner and the **Labor of Love Helping Hands** organization stepped up to the plate. Volunteers from the organization immediately provided the family with essentials while Eric and his family could focus on the bigger issues of dealing with the loss of a home. They also planned a benefit fundraiser to help with the financial difficulties of replacing countless items lost, and opened their hearts to offer their support and a friendly caring smile.

**North Central Electric Cooperative** has promoted a volunteer work day for several years. Each May, approximately 20 NCE employees and their family members show up, rain or shine, at Lake Metigoshe State Park to provide a "shot in the arm" and help get the park on track by building docks, repairing and upgrading playgrounds, sprucing up trails, repairing picnic tables, and general park clean up. Over 600 hours of volunteer labor have benefited Lake Metigoshe State Park over the years.

**The Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation** generously supported the NDPRD Photo Challenge as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration by providing lodging, two rounds of golf at Bully Pulpit, two tickets to the Pitchfork Fondue, two tickets for the Medora Musical, and two tickets to the Medora Salute Show.

**Sara Prout**, of Grand Forks, is one of those business contacts that is so very much appreciated and valued by NDPRD for her part in coordinating donations and help for special events at Turtle River State Park.

**Keri Wanner**, has worked tirelessly advocating safe, groomed snowmobile trails and snowmobile safety education for many years. ND Parks and Recreation recognizes her efforts in working with the non-profit Snowmobile North Dakota as well as her support and advocacy for all ND trails, and her work on the Recreational Trail Program Advisory Committee and numerous highway vehicle clubs and non-motorized user groups.

Merit Awards are presented to those employees of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department who go “above and beyond” in their support of the agency and its objectives. This year’s selections were:

**Terry Anderson** for his dedication and willingness to give up family time during his scheduled time off to assist in the renovation of the Park Manager residence at Fort Ransom State Park.

**Gabe Sattler** has worked diligently to make sure the ingenuity, outside of the box thinking, and unorthodox techniques for subcontracts are following the quality control standards necessary to build two full-service yurts at Fort Ransom State Park.

**Brendan Ternes** was put to the test to oversee construction of the new residence at Cross Ranch State Park that had been destroyed by fire.

**Matt Gardner** for his outstanding efforts in guiding the operations and management of the transition of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Ft Mandan to NDPRD.

**Grahams Island State Park** and **Icelandic State Park** are commended for their work in the establishment of upgraded park interpretive amphitheaters in their respective parks.

**Fort Stevenson State Park** for its efforts in a special interpretive event of tree tapping and maple syrup making from the Box Elder trees in abundance at the park.

**Brad Pozarnsky** for his role in developing the NDPRD Honor Guard.

**Justin Robinson, Char Binstock, Ryan Nelson, Erik Dietrich and Ryan Gardner** – members of the NDPRD Honor Guard – for their dedication and perseverance to complete the strenuous Honor Guard training requirements.