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Press Release

Parks and Facilities, Public Services receive Open Arms Award

City workers honored for street maintenance, other services during Arkalalah

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (November 24, 2015) — Two City of Arkansas City divisions were honored Tuesday by the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce for their service during the Arkalalah festival.

The Public Services Division, part of the City's Public Works Department, and the Parks and Facilities Division received the chamber's Open Arms Award at a noon luncheon and award presentation at the Northwest Community Center, 615 W. Birch Ave.

Members of the chamber's Member Services and Awards Committee overwhelmingly chose the two divisions as the award recipient for their tireless service to the community during the annual fall festival.

The Open Arms Award is presented quarterly to one of the 42 area nonprofit chamber-member organizations that exhibits exemplary achievement in community involvement or other outstanding accomplishments. Quarterly Open Arms Award recipients are eligible for an annual Open Arms of the Year Award, to be presented at the chamber's annual banquet on Feb. 6, 2016.

The Parks and Facilities Division, which is directed by Tony Tapia, is responsible for the maintenance of all City facilities, including downtown lighting, parks, sidewalks and traffic signals.

Tapia's workers also are responsible for installing the temporary utility poles used by Arkalalah vendors to connect to electricity, as well as facilitating hookups for water.

The Public Services Division is headed by Public Works Director Eric Broce, Assistant Public Works Director Mike Crandall and Public Services Superintendent Randy Jacobs.

This division is responsible for maintaining the City's streets and stormwater system, as well as providing sanitation service. It manages the complicated blockade system that directs traffic during the festival's carnival, vendors and parades; cleans the streets after the Big Parade; and collects trash.

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Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Frazee, who also is an employee of the Public Works Department, helps to direct and coordinate the City's traffic detouring efforts and parade management.

"Ark City is fortunate to have the caliber of people working in the City departments that it has," said Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce CEO Sydney Bland.

"Randy Jacobs, Bob Frazee, and Tony Tapia are not only available at all times for calls, emails and texts, but are always pleasant and positive. It is my pleasure to work with the City's Public Services Division, Parks and Facilities Division, and Police and Fire-EMS departments."

Bland was joined in giving the award by four members of the Member Services and Awards Committee — Angie Bruce, of L.G. Pike Construction; Arty Hicks, with The Arkansas City Traveler; Arkansas City Public Library director Mendy Pfannenstiel; and Melanie Wright, who serves as the committee's chair — plus Pam Crain, director of the Ark City Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).

"We appreciate you so much," Crain said. "Part of my job is to bring people into the community to visit. If it's not beautiful when they get here, it's not a good deal. You make what the CVB does work."

"The success with which these entities carried out their commitment to the community has not gone unnoticed by the Ark City chamber," Wright said.

"Thank you guys very much," Jacobs said to his Public Services workers. "It's only possible because of you guys."