

At Last, National Recognition for Oak Hills!
August, 2013 Board Newsletter

On July 10, the U.S Department of the Interior, National Park Service signed the document that placed Oak Hills on the National Register of Historic Places. Our 48-year old community is the youngest historic district in Oregon and one of the youngest nationwide to be added to the Register.

The initiative to place Oak Hills on the national register was championed by long-time resident, Darla Castagno. Several years ago, Darla approached the Oak Hills Board to present her idea of adding Oak Hills to the national register. Darla clearly saw the uniqueness of our neighborhood and believed that it had all of the attributes that defined an historic district. Darla's initiative was clearly reinforced by the neighborhood at the Oak Hills Homeowners Association Annual Meeting on May 2012 when 82 percent of homeowners voted in favor of the nomination. The special qualities of Oak Hills was noted by Diana Painter, National Register coordinator for the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) who recently said "Oak Hills epitomizes the best in post-war development, emphasizing varying residential densities, mixed uses, the incorporation of open space, and land conservation." Oak Hills was cited for setting precedents for implementing self-governance in suburban developments through our homeowner association, progressive master planning, and flexible land use codes. We were also the model when Washington County developed its land-use regulations. Painter went on to say "The Beaverton area is known for its mid-century modern resources and this is the first district from that era to be recognized. According to some, there are no other neighborhoods quite like Oak Hills so there may not be similar listings for some time.

What does our listing on the National Register of Historic Places mean to us? First of all, there are the bragging rights that come with the designation and most importantly, pride of our neighborhood. Secondly, other historic districts have seen increased property values as a result of the designation. Finally, in Oregon, under state law, owners of listed properties may apply for a property tax benefit, a "freeze" of the assessed value of the property for a 10-year period, provided the property is in need of rehabilitation.

On behalf of the Oak Hills community, the Board would like to extend our wholehearted thanks to Darla Castagno and her untiring efforts to make this happen. Her countless hours meeting with representatives of local and state agencies and organizations and with other Oak Hills neighbors clearly made the difference in the success of this initiative. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Historic Preservation League of Oregon, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, and Washington County. As a result of an agreement reached with Washington County, the County has paid our consultant, URS, to write the nomination as well as to pay up to \$3,500 to add historic district markers to our street signs.