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For more information, contact:
Megan Doern (Alliance), 503.552.6754
Stephanie Selk (DMI), 503.827.6564

Shoppers Flock to Downtown Portland During Holiday Season *Pedestrian Count Up, Retailers Report Strong Sales*

PORTLAND, Ore. – Downtown Portland was the place to shop during the 2007 holiday season with 25 percent more pedestrians hitting the streets and large and small retailers reporting strong holiday sales. The increase in downtown shopping can be contributed to new and remodeled stores as well as the construction moratorium that allowed for better access to downtown streets during the holidays.

“There was a celebratory and upbeat feeling in downtown Portland,” says Chris Finks, Director of the Downtown Marketing Initiative. “We had a lot of elements come together such as the construction moratorium, kicker checks and relatively mild weather that put Portland in a unique position nationally.” Downtown retailers bucked the trend of decreased holiday sales nationwide with an average sales increase between 5-6 percent when compared to 2006. Here is what some retailers are saying:

“The construction moratorium had a very positive effect on all of downtown shopping through the holiday season and beyond,” reports Downtown Retail Council Chair Stephen Pirkl, owner of Stephen Vincent Jewelers. “The moratorium encouraged people to come downtown and experience everything we have to offer and as a result we saw very strong sales- up considerably from last year.”

“December was a strong month for us, especially in the bar,” says Red Star General Manager Reagan Corbett. “Our restaurant is located at SW 5th and Alder on the new transit mall, so the construction moratorium and the opening of the new Macy’s definitely helped to bring people downtown to shop and into the restaurant.”

These strong sales figures can be attributed to the increase in pedestrian traffic. The overall pedestrian count increased by 25 percent this year, and most notably, the corner of 4th & Morrison increased by more than 80 percent and SW 3rd & Taylor, Broadway & Morrison, and 10th & Washington increased by 49 percent, 33 percent and 28 percent, respectively.

More data can be found at

http://www.portlandalliance.com/downtown_services/pedestrian-traffic-counts.html.

“While downtown is always special during the holidays, the new stores such as the remodeled Macy’s, Michael Allen’s and Carl Greve, proved to be a tremendous draw and gave all of downtown retail a boost,” said Sandi McDonough, President and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance.

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The Downtown Marketing Initiative is an innovative public/private partnership created in July 2006 and funded by the City of Portland dedicated to promoting the long-term vitality of downtown Portland.

The Portland Business Alliance is Greater Portland’s Chamber of Commerce representing more than 1,300 businesses in the region. The Alliance focuses on central city and regional issues and recognizes that the vitality of the central city and the region depend on one another, and Portland’s vibrant, growing downtown is a regional asset.