

Pride In Stride

A Q&A with Pride Northwest president Debra Porta

BY AARON SPENCER

In many regards, Portland's Pride this year was considered successful. The nonprofit Pride Northwest organizes and executes the annual festival and parade. *Just Out* sat with Debra Porta, president of Pride Northwest, to talk about the event and the nonprofit. Porta has been on the Pride Northwest board since 2006 and is pursuing a master's degree in public administration with a specialization in nonprofit management at Portland State University.

For a complete transcript of the interview, including Porta's thoughts on this year's community stage and promotional efforts, and changes to both the festival and the organization, visit blogout.justout.com.

Just Out: How do you think Pride went this year?

Porta: I think overall there are certain things about the festival that went really well. The visibility was really high this year. People were really excited. We worked really hard to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

connect with organizations, groups that we have been working with for a couple of years, but we sort of amped it up this year and tried to bring in elements to the festival that would build the excitement, something to look forward to: the lighting of the bridge, the addition of the dance party, things like that.

For the second year in a row—and this is always an issue, something that we have to

“I think we actually do a good festival. Are there always logistical issues that we're working out, figuring out, all of that sort of stuff? Always. An event that large, it's always going to be there.”

-DEBRA PORTA, PRESIDENT, PRIDE NW

look at strategically—we did have significant rain affecting the festival on one day. Last year it was Sunday; this year it was Saturday [June 18]. And it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference in who comes through the door, how long they stay there, what kind of revenue comes through the gate, which is a significant part of our budget. So that one we're still crunching the numbers [on], seeing exactly how it played out. It was definitely not a financially gangbusters festival.

JO: What do you mean?

Porta: Meaning, for example, if both days had been even remotely close [in weather] to Sunday, it would have been a very profitable, so to speak, festival.

JO: How much money was raised at Portland Pride 2011?

Porta: We are still figuring that out because not all of the payments have come in.

JO: If you had to give Pride Northwest an overall grade, in terms of how the organization did its job, what would it be?

Porta: That's a really subjective answer because the things that I grade us on, particularly because of the program I'm in right now, are very different than someone from the community and how they're going to grade us or even how some of the other board members will grade us because I'm aware of the nuts and bolts that a nonprofit organization operates under. So when I look at it from that perspective, we have a lot of work to do, and we are moving in that direction. This is something that has always been an issue for Pride

Peacock Productions, Inc. presents

the 4th annual

Peacock After Dark

A benefit for the Audrie M. Edwards Scholarship Fund

www.peacockafterdark.com

Portland Center for the Performing Arts

\$25 at Ticketmaster or PCPA Box Office

7pm Sunday, September 25, 2011