

**For Immediate Release**

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**The Award goes to...**

*Rotary International honors Aurora Rotary Club's Festival of Lights*

(AURORA, Illinois) June 11, 2010 – It was like Christmas in June for members of Aurora's Noon Rotary Club. The club was recently honored with the 2010 Significant Achievement Award from Rotary International (RI) for its Festival of Lights event, which is held annually from Thanksgiving weekend through Christmas at Aurora's Phillips Park.

The RI Significant Achievement Award recognizes local Rotary Club efforts in hosting events which address community needs while involving club members in personal service.

Since 2007, the Rotary Club of Aurora has presented the annual Festival of Lights, a month-long massive holiday light display for the enjoyment of residents throughout the Chicago area. The primary and ultimate goal of the program is to raise money for youth-based charities. The club has achieved this goal by engaging in unique public and private partnerships, as well as through visitor donations at the event.

In 2009, the Festival drew close to 10,000 vehicles and raised over \$21,000 dollars for local-area charities such as Mutual Ground (shelter for abused women and children); Hesed House (for the homeless); and the Aurora Flyers Track Cub (reaching youth through running).

“We were thrilled to receive this honor from Rotary International for the Festival of Lights,” said Judd Lofchie, president, Rotary Club of Aurora. “It is a great recognition not only for our club, but also for our many generous corporate sponsors who underwrite the costs of the light displays, as well as the City of Aurora, who partner with us in hosting this event.”

“This Festival showcases a great spirit of cooperation between Rotary, government, businesses and volunteers,” said Jim Czerwionka, District Governor, Rotary District 6450. “I visited the Festival in 2009 and was extremely impressed by how the event served as a catalyst for the entire community. Not only did you have the involvement of Rotary volunteers, the City of Aurora and local corporate sponsors, but you had volunteers from local schools and churches helping out with the event, as well as visitors driving through, enjoying the spectacle and making free-will offerings to charity. It is a great example of Rotary’s theme – Humanity in Motion.”

“This event is a win-win for all participants,” said Lofchie. “Youth-based charities benefit from donations raised; visitors are able to enjoy beautiful holiday lights; sponsors benefit through corporate citizenship and recognition; and Rotary is able to help charities in need while providing a wonderful holiday light show.”

Rotary International is the world's first service club organization, with more than 1.2 million members in 33,000 clubs worldwide. Rotary club members are volunteers who work locally, regionally, and internationally to combat hunger, improve health and sanitation, provide education and job training, promote peace, and eradicate polio under the motto “Service Above Self..”

The Rotary Club of Aurora is one of the oldest service clubs in the community. Chartered in 1923, it has 68 members who come from all walks of life.

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