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Mayor Katz recognizes Black History Month by proclaiming Feb. 27 “George Bell Day” in honor of the retiring BPA executive

Bonneville Power Administration

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PORTLAND, Ore. — George Bell has several years under his belt as a high-voltage executive at the Bonneville Power Administration. But he’s not just a conductor of electricity, he’s a maestro behind many scenes in Portland’s arts, culture, and community networks. These are just two reasons why Portland Mayor Vera Katz is honoring Bell with the proclamation of Feb. 27 as “George Bell Day.”

In her proclamation, Katz recognized Bell’s “long distinguished service at the Bonneville Power Administration” and “praised the contributions of the strong...men and women who have paved the road of opportunity for all.”

After 32 years, Bell worked his way up from a design engineer to senior vice president at BPA, where he manages more than 1,900 employees in the transmission services department.

The secret to his success?

“Well there are five,” he says. “Come early and stay late. Don’t be afraid of any task. Steer clear of unneeded confrontation. And, presume everyone wants to do a good job — that will make you friends and supporters. Finally, stimulate and motivate others toward results.”

When Bell isn’t at the helm of BPA’s transmission system, he’s transforming his energy into sculpting Portland as even a better place.

His palate of culture-enhancing volunteer activities includes serving as Chairman of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts advisory committee, Portland Center Stage Theatre

Company board of directors, the Lakewood Center for the Arts board of directors, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council board of directors.

Bell also founded Friends of the Performing Arts Center, a group that communicates the benefits of the center to the public, promotes general arts awareness, and creates a strong force of support for the center.

“George really cares about the arts,” said Kathleen Johnson-Khune, representing Portland’s Business Community for the Arts. “He sees the big picture and is great at bringing together people and solving problems.”

Besides his involvement with the arts, Bell volunteers his time for social and community efforts. Among other things, he sits on the board for Oregon Public Broadcasting and volunteers for the Police Activities League, an organization that works to prevent juvenile crime.

“Volunteering revitalizes my spirit and reminds me of who I am,” Bell said. Through it, he is able to “educate and support young people and point them to a more well-rounded, healthy lifestyle. Who knows where the next Mozart will come from?”

Bell will retire from BPA on March 28 of this year, but you won’t see him kicking back any time soon. In addition to his volunteer community efforts, [Bell will be advising the Department of Energy](#) on technical and operational issues related to the Columbia River Treaty.

Bell’s post as an alternate member of the DOE’s Permanent Engineering Board will keep him heavily involved with Northwest power issues. The board was established in 1964 to ensure that the Columbia and Kootenai Rivers are operated to yield the most flood control and power, within agreed limits, and to prepare reports on water flows, compliance with the Treaty and any deviations from operating plans.

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