

NEWS RELEASE

Friends of Charles Lewis

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“Five Buck Chuck” is 2nd Candidate Certified for Voter Owned Elections! (1st to Spend Public Money Filling Potholes)

PORTLAND, Oregon – On Friday, February 8th, 2008, Charles Lewis became the second person certified for Portland’s publicly financed campaigns. When Lewis receives money from the City on Wednesday, his first purchase will be a dump truck full of gravel to fill potholes on a public street in Southeast Portland.

“City Council needs to get back to the basics of running a civilized society,” said Lewis. “That means rebuilding our infrastructure, creating new jobs, and making sure everyone can afford to live in Portland.”

Lewis and supporters will fix the massive potholes located on SE Main Street between 89th and 88th Avenues. The event is an outcrop of a conversation Lewis struck up with a voter living on the unimproved street. While out speaking to voters in Southeast Portland, Lewis met Glen Miller who lives on the dirt road. The two shared their concerns about the state of Portland’s roads and infrastructure and soon the “Pothole Protest” was on.

“It’s easy to just talk about the importance of good roads for bikes, cars, and buses,” said Lewis. “It’s another thing to use your limited campaign funds to actually accomplish something in Portland. When the election is over, my campaign will be confident that we will have left Portland an even better place.”

Lewis will also use the event to announce “The Pothole Challenge,” a contest where Portland residents can submit photographs and stories about their neighborhood’s worst potholes and unmet city concerns via Lewis’ web site (www.CharlesLewis.com). The campaign will select one entry every week that will be addressed by Lewis’ team of community volunteers (www.CommunityCorps.org). In addition to potholes, Portland residents can submit ideas for any unmet city concern that Lewis and his team of volunteers will tackle with community support.

Lewis was able to qualify for public financing by collecting and submitting 1,090 verified signatures and donations from Portland voters. In total, Lewis will receive \$141,154 in public funds to run his campaign. It is an extremely limited amount of funding for a city-wide campaign, but Lewis is used to living frugally and creatively. Not only did he live in the Congo as a Peace Corps Volunteer, but Lewis also started up Ethos Music Center on a shoestring budget. Almost ten years later, Ethos is one of the largest nonprofit music centers in the region, providing music education to over 2,200 kids every year. Charles and his wife Sarah also own a green business called Portland Duck Tours that features bio-diesel powered amphibious bus tours of Portland.

The “Pothole Protest” will take place in front of the house located at 8844 SE Main Street on Wednesday, February 13th at 9am. The event will include community volunteers, a mini bulldozer, and a dump truck filled with gravel. The street is immediately behind Clark Elementary School, highlighting the need for safe streets for everyone. This unimproved street has been featured before on television by politicians selling new taxes, yet none have rolled up their shirt sleeves to actually fix the problem. Lewis is different.

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Charles and his wife Sarah live on a dirt road in the Cully Neighborhood and both experience the inequities involved with the city everyday. As such, Lewis' campaign is focused on instilling city government with a sense of both fiscal *and* social responsibility. Lewis' demonstrated leadership as a nonprofit director, green business owner, and effective social entrepreneur make him the best candidate for Portland City Council.

“The state of our roads mirrors the vast inequities many Portland residents face in terms of access to affordable housing, health care, and livable wage jobs,” said Lewis. “Our city government subsidizes million dollar condos and Trams, but won't address problems that affect everyone's lives. We need new blood in city hall – not just for new blood's sake – but new blood for a change.”

This isn't the first time Lewis has filled potholes. Last summer, Lewis and his neighbors worked together to fill the potholes on their dirt road. The next morning, Lewis was surprised to see a car from the City Department of Transportation slowly drive by his house – quickly speeding off when Lewis waved. A short time later, a City Department of Transportation truck stopped and two employees got out and took pictures of the street, apparently worried that Lewis had damaged the unimproved road by filling in potholes.

“It was the first time I ever saw a Department of Transportation vehicle on our street,” said Lewis. “I was hoping they might do something to improve our road, but I haven't seen them since. As the city charter stands now, Portlanders are responsible for taking care of the unimproved roads next to their homes. I'm not sure why the city would have a problem with us filling in our potholes, particularly when it won't touch them itself.”

For more information concerning Lewis' campaign including a full bio, please see www.CharlesLewis.com.

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