



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 19, 2010

For more information, contact:

Christina Starr

206-352-6402

cstarr@frause.com

VETERANS DAY PARADE TO CELEBRATE MORE THAN 150 YEARS OF VANCOUVER AND NORTHWEST HISTORY

Iconic community parade to highlight role of "Buffalo Soldiers" from 1870 to 1900

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Though few realize it, Vancouver, Wash., (located just minutes north of Portland, Ore.) is steeped in local history. Settled by the British Hudson's Bay Company as early as 1824 and chartered as a city in 1857, Vancouver was settled long before its namesake to the north. On Saturday, Nov. 6, members of Clark County and surrounding communities will gather to celebrate the region's storied past with the Veterans Parade at Fort Vancouver. Formerly known as the Celebrate Freedom Veterans Parade, the new name reflects a focus on Vancouver's deep roots as a military base as well as a new parade route.

The theme for this year's parade is "Honoring the Buffalo Soldiers' Service at Vancouver Barracks," an homage to the many African American soldiers who served in the U.S. Army at the Vancouver Barracks during the Indian Wars. The Barracks were established by the U.S. Army in 1849. In its day, the Barracks was the center of military operations in the Pacific Northwest up until World War I and remained active through World War II. In 1948, the historic site was declared a unit of the National Park Service in order to preserve the many layers of history.

"We want locals and visitors alike to have an opportunity not only to celebrate the brave people who have served our country, but also to explore Vancouver's unique history," said Kim Bennett, president and CEO of the Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office.

This is the first year that the annual parade will be held within the confines of the Fort Vancouver National Site. The parade will begin at the east end of Officers Row, a quaint tree-lined street filled with 22 fully restored Victorian homes built in the 1800s, including the Marshall House, where a preliminary parade ceremony will take place. The parade will continue along the historic site and will end at the Pearson Air Museum, one of the oldest continually operating airfields in the U.S. The parade's route will also pass through the Vancouver Barracks, which originally housed many famous Army units and personnel throughout the Army's 160-year history at the Vancouver Barracks. Renowned Army officers who were stationed here include Ulysses S. Grant, Oliver Otis Howard, and George C. Marshall. Stately houses bearing those officers' names welcome visitors to the site today.

"This area is so incredibly rich with history," said Susan Parrish of the Fort Vancouver National Trust. "We look forward to showcasing Vancouver's extraordinary treasures and honoring the vital role that the military has served in our community since the establishment of the Vancouver Barracks 161 years ago."

Approximately 2,500 individuals – including active members of the military and veterans – will participate in the parade, one of the largest Department of Defense-sanctioned Veterans Day parades on the West coast. For more information on the Veterans Day parade and Vancouver's historic sites, visit www.VisitVancouverUSA.com.

About Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office

Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office (formerly Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau) is an economic development organization responsible for competitively marketing Vancouver and the surrounding area as a destination for meetings, conventions, and group and leisure travelers. The organization's mission is to promote Vancouver and Clark County by increasing convention and visitor business. For more information call 360-750-1553, or log on to www.VisitVancouverUSA.com.

###