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Note: Helmets are required in order to skate in the designated skate area.

Free World-Class Public Skatepark Opens in Houston

Lee & Joe Jamail Skatepark opens to the public June 1, 2008

HOUSTON, TX (May 12, 2008) --- At last! The long-awaited free downtown skatepark will open for public use on June 1. The **Houston Parks Board** (HPB) and **Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (HPARD) announce the **Grand Opening of the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark on Sunday, June 1 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.** The entire family will enjoy the skating, artwork, live music and more during the first of what will be many events at the new downtown skatepark.

"It's great to see the wheels turning on such a special addition to our parks scene," said Mayor Bill White. "We can't thank the Jamails and the other donors enough for their vision and generosity."

The park is named after Lee and Joe Jamail in appreciation of a generous gift donated by the Jamail family. In addition to the naming gift, the Jamail family has been influential in helping develop the full scope of the park as a model of urban environment.

"This is a park that my mom would have been very proud to see realized in Houston," said Randall Jamail, son of Lee and Joe Jamail. "We are excited to see the integration of urban art and culture in such an accessible public space. We hope the park continues to adapt to Houston's diverse culture and we are appreciative of all the private and public support that helped to shape this unique, urban environment."

The Jamail gift, along with funding from several leading Houston Families, the City of Houston, Huffington Foundation, the Houston Downtown Management District and several other Houstonians have been used to construct and open the park.

"I really can not thank the Houston community enough for their overwhelming support of this skatepark," said Roksan Okan-Vick, Executive Director of the Houston Parks Board. "I am proud that our city now has a vibrant urban space for our youth to be active in a safe and free skating environment."

"We are very excited to be opening the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark this summer," said Joe Turner, Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "We know that this venue will be a very popular one for Houstonians and skateboard enthusiasts from across the country."

The Grand Opening day events include a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 1:00 p.m. with Mayor Bill White, the Jamail family, and representatives from HPB, HPARD, and PUSH. Activities during the rest of the afternoon will rotate between open public skating sessions and professional skateboarder "jam sessions." Local DJs Squincy Jones and Dayta will be spinning tunes to keep the crowd hyped.

Houstonians will be joined by some of the top professional skateboarders in the country. A few of the professional riders include: **Kronik Energy's Benji Galloway** (World Cup Skate Board Champion); **Nike's Lance Mountain**; **Hurley International's Steve "Salba" Alba, Bruno Passos, and Lincoln Ueda**; and **Independent Trucks** has incorporated Houston as a destination along their national tour, bringing 17 of their riders including **Christian Hosoi, Andrew Reynolds, and Steve Caballero**, just to name a few.

The Houston Parks Board has partnered with the **Orange Show Center for Visionary Art** to coordinate the display of five large panels showcasing urban art created by local aerosol artists. The five panels will be placed along "Skater Alley," the winding walkway between Sabine Street and the skatepark entrance, and will be featured at the park for six months. In addition to the five panels, the Orange Show has coordinated a **live urban art demonstration** that will take place as visitors enter the park on Opening Day.

Designed by premier skatepark firm Grindline, the **Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark** is a state-of-the-art 30,000 square foot in-ground public facility, known to contain the largest cradle in the world. Houston's new skateboarding facility will provide the first world-class, in-ground skatepark in our region, and vault the city to the forefront of American venues for this fast-growing, dynamic sport. The park has areas for skaters of all levels, from the seasoned pro to the beginner.

The Jamail Skatepark is located along the Buffalo Bayou on the corner of Memorial Drive and Sabine Street Bridge. The park will be fully staffed during operating hours by members of HPARD. Regular Hours of Operation are Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Please see the Houston Parks Board website for a complete list of rules and regulations.

Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark Partners

The **Houston Parks Board**, under the direction of Roksan Okan-Vick, is the coordinator of the skatepark project. HPB coordination includes securing collaborative partners, overseeing the design and construction of the park, and raising the funds needed to build the park.

The **Houston Parks and Recreation Department**, under the direction of Joe Turner, provided a section of Eleanor Tinsley Park for the location of the new skatepark. Once opened the department will manage, maintain and steward the facility for the public.

Public Use Skateparks for Houston (PUSH) is a non-profit organization that has assisted the HPB by helping raise awareness of the park and providing invaluable input to the design and special event planning teams.

For more information, visit www.houstonparksboard.org or call the Houston Parks Board at (713) 942-8500. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department or the rules and operation of the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark call (713) 845-1135 or visit www.houstonparks.org.

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About Houston Parks Board

The Houston Parks Board is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to acquire, improve, and protect parkland for Houston. Since its inception in 1975, the Houston Parks Board has played an instrumental role in the acquisition of more than 15,000 acres of parkland for all Houstonians to enjoy. For more information, visit www.houstonparksboard.org

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to the maintenance and stewardship of Houston's greenspace and parkland for the citizens of Houston and to fulfilling the department's mission of "enhancing the quality of urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community." For more information, visit www.houstonparks.org.