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# Media Release

For Immediate Release

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## Thompson Elk statue returns to new and improved fountain base on SW Main St. in mid-April

### Portlanders invited to join April 12 homecoming celebration

PORTLAND, Ore. – The popular Thompson Elk statue – cleaned, polished and ready to shine – is scheduled to return to a new and improved granite fountain pedestal in mid-April. The City of Portland, Portland Parks Foundation and Regional Arts & Culture Council welcome all to join a [community celebration](#) on Sunday, April 12.

“The Thompson Elk Statue has triumphantly returned to a resurgent downtown Portland,” said Mayor Keith Wilson. “I want to thank the many City staff, particularly the Portland Water Bureau, the Portland Parks Foundation, and other partners whose work made the return possible. This landmark is part of Portland’s story, the long-awaited rededication represents a milestone in the rebuilding, restoration, and revitalization of our beautiful city.”

### Thompson Elk Homecoming Celebration Details

**When: Ceremony begins at 1:30 p.m. (ASL interpretation provided),** with community event from 1 to 4 p.m.

- From 1 to 4 p.m., check out community booths, grab a bite from local food carts, snag free stuff, take some elk selfies (“elkies,” if you will) and more.
- At 1:30 p.m., the dedication ceremony will include remarks from civic leaders followed by a ribbon cutting and a performance by [IN A LANDSCAPE: Classical Music in the Wild™](#), a Portland-based nonprofit outdoor concert series that has presented more than 350 outdoor concerts across the mountain tops and coastlines of Western America.

**Where:** Chapman and Lowndale Squares, [SW Main St. between Third and Fourth Avenues](#), in Downtown Portland.

**Additional information:** [portland.gov/elk-homecoming](https://portland.gov/elk-homecoming)

**Cost:** Free! Come one, come all and celebrate the Thompson Elk Fountain!

## **The Power of Partnership**

The fountain's long-awaited return is the result of a coordinated, citywide effort. The statue was removed in July 2020 after fires damaged the fountain's stone base and an inspection found the bronze elk was not securely attached, creating a fall risk. In the past few years, City and local partners worked together to ensure an improved return of this Portland icon.

The Portland Water Bureau led the project team to repair and restore the historic fountain and bring it back into service. The Office of Arts and Culture oversaw the elk as part of Portland's public art collection, with the Regional Arts and Culture Council caring for and safeguarding the statue during restoration. The Portland Parks Foundation helped launch the project by funding early planning and design, moving the restoration from concept to construction. The Portland Bureau of Transportation partnered on the project by adjusting the striping of SW Main Street around the fountain, improving clearance for TriMet buses, people driving, and people biking. The City's Procurement Office worked to ensure that the selected contractors had the appropriate experience in historic restoration to undertake this important work. Moving forward the fountain will be maintained by Portland Parks and Recreation. Since the statue's removal in 2020, the Portland Parks & Recreation Fountain Maintenance Team has worked in close partnership with the Portland Water Bureau, contributing to planning efforts, design-build discussions, and serving as subject matter experts on the fountain's mechanical and lighting systems. The Portland Parks & Recreation Fountain Maintenance Team will be working alongside the construction team during fountain testing, before ultimately resuming responsibility for the site's daily care and long-term maintenance.

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"The Thompson Elk's return represents the kind of thoughtful collaboration that makes Portland stronger," said deputy city administrator for public works Priya Dhanapal. "Our bureaus were proud to help lead this effort alongside community partners to bring back a beloved landmark that connects us to Portland's history, public spaces, and future. We are excited to see it take its rightful place in the heart of our city for generations to come."

"The Elk has inspired Portlanders and visitors for generations, and we invite you to join us in welcoming the statue home to its original location for its next 100 years," said Darion Jones, assistant director of the Office of Arts & Culture. "This project represents years of collaboration and partnership across the city and with our partners, and I am so proud to bring the Thompson Elk back home to Downtown alongside the Water Bureau, the Regional Arts & Culture Council, the Portland Parks Foundation and others."

The restored Thompson Elk Fountain strikes a balance between Portland's traditional past and its sustainable future. Granite for the fountain base was sourced from the original quarry in Barre, Vermont – a nod to the history. Modern engineering features, like a recirculating water-efficient pump and stronger anchoring of the bronze statue will make the feature more resilient in the decades ahead.

“The return of the Elk Fountain is a testament to the power of partnership. Portland Parks Foundation’s initial advisory team helped chart the path forward, Architectural Resources Group brought nationally recognized preservation expertise to the design, and former City leaders made the project possible by prioritizing it in the budget. Portland Water Bureau carried the work forward with care, alongside the construction team led by Cedar Mills Construction and the extraordinary stone restoration by Pioneer Waterproofing. With Office of Arts & Culture and Regional Arts & Culture Council caring for and restoring the statue to its perch and 65 civic patrons contributing gifts ranging from \$10 to \$50,000 to expedite its return by as much as 18 months, this effort reflects the shared commitment of public agencies, preservation experts, and community members to bringing this beloved Portland landmark back to life.”

“As the caretakers of the elk statue for the past 30 years, we at the Regional Arts and Culture Council have been looking forward to its reinstallation for the past five years, said RACC Director of Partnerships and Programs Kristin Law Calhoun. “We have been honored with this role and we are grateful and excited to be part of this new partnership to bring this iconic statue bridging the past and the present back to all Portlanders.”

More information about the celebration can be found on the city’s Thompson Elk Homecoming Celebration web page: [portland.gov/elk-homecoming](http://portland.gov/elk-homecoming).

More [information about the restoration project can be found on the City of Portland’s website](#).

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### **503-823-4000 Translation and Interpretation**

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