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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

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National Lodge
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Chinese American Citizens Alliance Applauds Portland Lodge's Commemorative Plaque for Advancing Recognition of Historic Chinese Community

San Francisco, September 18, 2017—The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) applauds C.A.C.A. Portland Lodge for its efforts to advance public recognition of the city's earliest Chinese settlers. On Friday, September 15, representatives of C.A.C.A. Portland, officials from Portland City Council and Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and members of the city's Chinese American community gathered for a dedication of a new plaque in the heart of the city's original Chinatown.

A gift to the city from the C.A.C.A. Portland Lodge, the plaque commemorates the more than 5,000 Chinese dwellers living and working on SW 2nd Avenue between Taylor and Burnside, Portland's original Chinatown between 1863 and 1900. Designed by architect and artist Suenn Ho, the plaque recognizes the contributions of these early settlers and memorializes their history for future generations. City of Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman acknowledged the long and storied history of the Chinese American community in Portland. "The plaque commemorates this rich history and we deeply appreciate this gift to Portland," he said at the dedication.

"I would like to quote Alan Spears of National Park Conservation Association who said, 'The absence of our people in the historical landscape of our country is in itself a civil rights matter,'" said Helen Ying, Portland Lodge Board Director and Old Town Chinatown Community Association Chair. "We are simply elated to gift the bronze plaque to the City and mark the history and contributions of the Chinese American community to Portland." Betty Jean Lee, Portland Lodge Board Director, added, "It has taken over a century to finally have the first Chinese community in Oregon documented. Now we can share it with the whole world."

Portland Lodge is a chapter of the C.A.C.A. National Lodge. Established in 1921, Portland Lodge has a three-fold mission to develop leadership, service the community and promote civil rights.

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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Greater New York (NY), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA) and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.