



For Immediate Release
May 17, 2011

Contact: Dana Woodson
(757) 393-5143

**May Recognized as Building Safety Month
– An International Celebration of Safe and Sensible Structures –**

To help raise awareness of the importance of building safety, the City of Portsmouth's Department of Permits and Inspections proudly celebrates *Building Safety Month*, "An International Celebration of Safe and Sensible Structures", during the month of May. The four areas of focus are: *Energy and Green Building; Disaster Safety and Mitigation; Fire Safety and Awareness; and Backyard Safety*. Across the nation, leaders and communities are promoting the use and understanding of these topics to protect lives and property.

"The important work that we do often goes unnoticed until a catastrophic event occurs," said Douglas Smith, Portsmouth Building Official. "When building safety and fire prevention experts inspect buildings during and after construction, we help to ensure that the places where you live, learn, work, worship, and play are safe," he added.

Building safety and fire prevention codes address all aspects of construction, such as structural soundness of buildings, reliability of fire prevention and suppression systems, plumbing and mechanical systems, and energy efficiency and sustainability. Ensuring that buildings are safe requires the active participation of building safety and fire prevention officials, architects, builders, engineers, and others in the construction industry, as well as property owners.

"Public safety is our number one concern. During Building Safety Month and all year long, building safety and fire prevention officials are here to help protect you, your family, and our community," said Smith.

During the City Council Meeting on May 9, 2011, Mayor Kenneth I. Wright presented Smith and staff and Fire Chief Don Horton and staff a proclamation supporting May as National Building Safety Month in the City of Portsmouth.

#