



# Media Advisory

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## Oregon State Penitentiary to celebrate 150 years of service

Who: Oregon Department of Corrections

What: Oregon State Penitentiary 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

When: May 12, 2016  
11:00 a.m.

Where: 2605 State Street  
Salem, Oregon 97310

Contact Information: Crystal Archdeacon, 503-378-2678  
[Crystal.L.Archdeacon@doc.state.or.us](mailto:Crystal.L.Archdeacon@doc.state.or.us)

Additional Information: Members of the media are invited to the anniversary. Media arriving on the Penitentiary grounds will be directed to a staging area. Members of the media will check in and be issued a press badge. Further instructions will be given at check in. Members of the media must RSVP no later than May 11, 2016, at 2 p.m. via email or phone.

Background: The Oregon State Penitentiary is the oldest prison in Oregon and the only maximum security institution operated by the Department of Corrections. The Penitentiary has been sited at three separate locations. Originally, the Penitentiary was called the Oregon Territory Jail and was located in Oregon City, then the capitol of Oregon. The Territory Jail was built in April 1842 and was destroyed by fire on August 18, 1846.

After the fire, the Oregon territory relied on local jails for the housing of prisoners until 1853 when Portland was selected as the site for a new prison.

Construction of the prison began in January 1854. One of the major problems with the Portland site was that two lots of land had been purchased for the prison, but they were on opposite sides of Front Street. The City of Portland refused to close or reroute that portion of Front Street. The Portland site was abandoned in 1866 and all

prisoners were moved to the new prison in Salem. Unlike the old prison, which was constructed primarily of wood, the new Penitentiary was built of brick and resembled a fortress. The Oregon State Penitentiary is still located on the Salem site originally selected.

The current Penitentiary is home to a population of inmates that fluctuates between 1900 and 2100. The Penitentiary has 22 acres of land space within the perimeter walls. Within the boundaries of this self-contained city are four cell blocks, two dormitories, several types of industries, five vocational training shops, a physical plant with ten shops, education department, library, counselors, infirmary, canteen, dining room, kitchen, and two recreation areas.

####