

About the Oregon Heritage Commission

Statutory Purpose: *The Oregon Heritage Commission is designated the primary agency for coordination of heritage activities and shall coordinate its activities with public and private organizations that express an interest in the heritage of Oregon.*

Statutory Location: *The 1995 Legislature created the Oregon Heritage Commission and made it a part of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. It is currently part of the department's Heritage and Community Programs Division.*

Current Programs and Responsibilities:

1. Heritage Grants
2. Museum Grants
3. Heritage Conference
4. Statewide Celebrations
5. Oregon Heritage Areas
6. Heritage All-Star Communities
7. Heritage Traditions
8. Former Historic Properties Commission artifacts
9. Regional Technical Assistance and Heritage MentorCorps
10. Library/Archives Coordinating Group
11. Collections Preservation Cabinet
12. Heritage Bulletins
13. Oregon Heritage News
14. Website
15. Social Media (Oregon Heritage Exchange blog/Facebook)
16. Oregon Heritage Plan
17. Encourage tourism related to heritage resources
18. Coordinate state celebrations of Asian American Heritage Month
19. Increase efficiency and avoid duplication among the various interest groups that seek to preserve heritage resources
20. Partnership with the Oregon Cultural Trust



The Commission also coordinates many of its programs with other activities of the Oregon Heritage and Community Relations Division of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. This includes programs such as the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries, the State Historic Preservation Office, and Oregon Main Street.

Oregon Heritage Plan 2014-2019



Heritage in Oregon

Every day, in countless ways, Oregonians experience their cultural heritage. They drive roads following routes first created by pioneers or Native Americans. They buy food from century-old farms. They shop at businesses in historic commercial areas. They visit parks created years ago by Oregonians with visions of healthy communities.

Oregonians attend schools and work in buildings built by and named for historic people, whose fortitude and dreams created the businesses and communities they live in. An Oregonian's engineering or medical discovery decades ago may have been the breakthrough that enabled today's medical treatment.

An Oregonian's dress, food, language, material goods and music are the tangible remnants of heritages transmitted to them from previous generations of Oregonians and from those new to Oregon. This means heritage is found in the closet, the workplace, the auditorium, the historic barn and elsewhere. In short, Oregon heritage is 24/7. Everywhere.

The Oregon Heritage Commission serves as a catalyst and coordinator for more than 1,000 non-profit organizations in the state that gather our heritage and/or make it available to the public. It completed a study in 2011 that confirmed Oregon has many vibrant heritage organizations, and that combined they have eight major challenges:

- ▶ Unstable and inadequate government and private funding.
- ▶ Little meaningful coordination and collaboration among heritage organizations and their communities.
- ▶ The inability to measure and articulate the economic value of Oregon heritage.
- ▶ Changing educational requirements that have reduced history instruction at all grade levels.
- ▶ A shortage of people with the skills and knowledge to address issues of preservation, fund raising, leadership and technology.
- ▶ Changing demographics and expectations, including developing new leadership.
- ▶ Limited use of 21st century communications and advocacy strategies.
- ▶ Uneven development and use of technology.

A Legislative Task Force, formed at the request of the Heritage Commission, recommended in 2012 a series of steps to strengthen Oregon's heritage organizations. Using these studies and recommendations, along with information from its own programs, the Heritage Commission is creating the following goals for improving the vitality of heritage organizations and the state's cultural heritage resources from 2014-2019. These goals link the work of the Heritage Commission with the heritage organizations and initiatives across the state.

Goals 2014 - 2019

Collections

- GOAL 1: Promote importance and significance of collections in communities and the state.
- GOAL 2: Encourage awareness of collections care issues in organizations
- GOAL 3: Support training of collections caretakers.

Economic Development / Tourism

- GOAL 1: Strengthen the role that heritage plays within Oregon tourism, primarily Travel Oregon.
- GOAL 2: Help heritage organizations take advantage of the opportunities to engage in heritage tourism.
- GOAL 3: Help heritage organizations to engage with relevant economic development opportunities in their communities.

Education

- GOAL 1: Learn from educators and the Department of Education what they want in terms of programmatic help.
- GOAL 2: Make Commission resources better available to educators and help educators understand how to utilize existing grant resources.

Communications

- GOAL 1: Create a plan for communicating with legislators and other public officials about heritage successes and issues.
- GOAL 2: Create communications toolkits for heritage leaders and organizations so they can talk succinctly and knowledgeably about heritage value and issues with community leaders, business and other related sectors, including the commission's programs.

