

## 2022 Oregon Heritage Conference - Going Virtual

*“Hey, should we talk about the latest variant and the conference?”*

*“Team, when should we make this decision?”*

*“What criteria are we using to make this decision?”*

*“If we stay in person, how do we keep people safe?”*

*“If we go online, how will we make those important, personal connections?”*

These are only a few of the questions that Oregon Heritage staff have been bouncing around for the last three months as they relate to the 2022 Oregon Heritage Conference and whether or not to move it online. Does it seem familiar to you? It seems that over the last two years all of us have been forced to make these really hard, really tough, and really emotionally charged decisions personally and professionally.

...(deep breath)...We have decided to move the 2022 Oregon Heritage Conference Online.

There, we said it! Now, we know all of you will have a variety of reactions: disappointment, relief, frustration, hunger (you know, for conference snacks), and so many more feelings about this. The fact that those feelings will vary across the board is one of the very reasons we made the decision to go online. We care about your health, keeping folks safe, people getting along during these difficult times, and everyone having the opportunity to join us as we talk about some really important challenges and opportunities in heritage preservation in Oregon.

*“But hey, Oregon Heritage, the conference is like three months away. Why make this decision now?”*

Great question, thank you for asking! Putting on a large event like this involves venues, catering, money, and so many logistical efforts. If we waited until the last minute to make this decision we would:

- NOT be able to transition to online quickly due to capacity,
- we would lose time and money,
- we would hurt our local partners,
- we would just have to cancel the conference and everyone would miss out on the great sessions we have spent months planning with some really awesome speakers.

During our decision making process, we decided to do the best online conference we can with the next three months of planning rather than risk not having the conference at all. Hopefully this also relieves all of you from the anxiety of deciding whether or not go.

Don't worry, we will offer creative ways to have those personal connections. We found success at the 2021 Oregon Heritage Summit and at the 2021 Oregon Main Street Conference, so we will implement some of those strategies and try out some new ones. We are also committing to do in person regional workshops in the fall where we can have fewer numbers, better controls on social distancing, and have the opportunity to network regionally in a safer way.

Now that we have made this decision, Murphy's Law will occur and the pandemic will have stabilized in the spring, right? Well if that is the case, you are welcome!

On a serious note, we at Oregon Heritage truly miss interacting with folks across the state and were really looking forward to this conference being in person. This was an incredibly hard decision but now that it's made, we are committing to an awesome online conference and awards event.

Thank you for all that you are doing and we are looking forward to the day when we can interact in person once again. A special thank you to all of our partners in Corvallis who have continually worked with us over the past three years to try and make this conference happen.

Stay tuned for updates on the conference schedule, plenary speakers, and registration by visiting [here](#).