

## OREGON HERITAGE WALKING THE TALK

Oregonians throughout the state are passionate about their heritage. That is demonstrated convincingly by the case studies highlighted below. These successes are an inspiration to all of us. They remind us that good things can be achieved even in bad times.

**Astoria Bicentennial:** The city chose early to do more than just have a party for its bicentennial in 2011. The city designated an organization to coordinate the effort, then provided financial support. The Astoria School District conducted an all-day teacher in-service about the community's history, created an Astoria history curriculum, and organized a high school class focused on its civic history. Businesses created special products, including new books and videos. Events include a preservation fair, a heritage fair, a lecture series, a fur trade encampment at nearby Fort Stevens, and more.

**Cottage Grove:** Cottage Grove organizations are embracing and enhancing the community's heritage in several ways. Building off its All-American city designation in 2004, the city has taken the lead in documenting public, private and nonprofit historic properties. It is working to list the local Armory on the National Register of Historic Places. The community has also secured out-of-town funding for preservation, including the state's oldest covered railroad bridge. Arts and history organizations jointly promote local events including the All Species Parade, Bohemia Mining Days and commemorations of the major films produced in the area.

**Crook County Historical Society:** Although the county had one of the highest unemployment rates in the state in November 2010, 81 percent of the voters approved a four-year property tax levy to support the Bowman Museum, which is operated by the historical society. At the same time, the non-profit historical society was nearing completion of a \$1.6 million capital campaign to expand. Factors cited for this success include the museum consciously serving the community and its location along a main highway. Also, voters had approved similar levies in three previous elections going back to 1996.

**Lane County Historical Society and Museum:** This Eugene-based organization has focused its efforts on several projects. A major conservation and scanning project initiated in December 2007 with grants enabled the museum to safely deal with dangerous nitrate



*Liberty Theatre, Astoria*

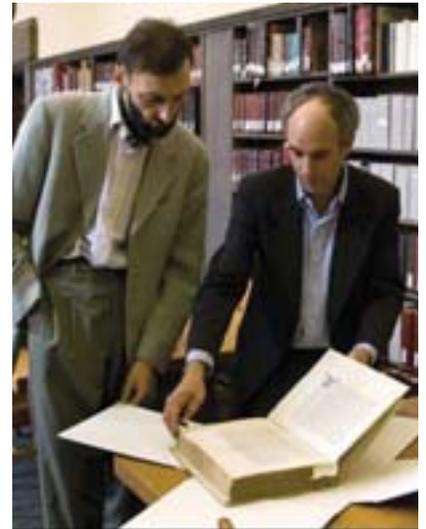
cellulose negatives, preserve the images, and make them available online. Additionally, the society became a partner with the Lane Educational Service District's Teaching American History grant, which opened new partnerships with schools and other local historical societies. The project is ongoing and expected to be completed in October 2012.

**Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center:** This center and museum in northeast Oregon celebrates the multi-ethnic culture of the railroad and timber industries of Maxville and similar communities. The center located in Enterprise has raised the visibility of local African-American history, hosted an annual gathering, conducted meetings telephonically with board members scattered around the country, and created connections with regional, state and national organizations.

**Oregon Digital Newspaper Project:** For decades, the University of Oregon has been the designated repository for the state's newspapers. With interest in online historical resources growing exponentially, the UO approached the Oregon State Library, the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and the Oregon Heritage Commission to determine if there was support for digitizing the state's newspapers. The effort, guided by historians and archivists from around the state, gained steam with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Now, more than 180,000 pages of historic Oregon newspapers can be searched online using keywords.

**Oregon Main Street Program:** The Oregon Main Street Program provides assistance, training, technical services, and grants to communities who want to preserve, revitalize, and establish their historic downtown commercial districts. Seventy-three communities, distributed among three performance level tiers, have each formed groups to spearhead their local revitalization. They have achieved significant results. In 2010 alone, the seven top tier communities upgraded 100 historic buildings, stimulated \$9.78 million in private re-investment, and generated net gains of 218 new jobs and 65 new businesses.

**Portland Archives Crawl:** Archivists from around the Portland area created this event in October 2010. Four facilities served as "crawl to" sites in downtown Portland, while 20 other participating archives mounted table displays. As people made their way from site to site, they listened to oral histories, watched film footage and listened to speakers describe how they've used archives. In addition to the usual media promotion, planners used blogs and tweets to interest people. Surveys showed that approximately 35-40 percent of the attendees had never visited an archive before.



*UO Special Collections*

**Southern Oregon Historical Cemeteries Lunch Bunch:** Once a quarter, the leaders of the area's historic cemeteries gather for a brownbag lunch to share challenges and solutions. These leaders, most of whom are volunteers, share tips about planning, programming, maintenance, and vandalism. Even a law enforcement official will regularly join in to gather and seek information about the cemeteries' issues.

**Washington County Museum and Historical Society:** When membership and the economy dropped off in 2008, it asked people to help re-define its mission. Deciding to increase its emphasis on education and art, the museum invited Print Arts Northwest, to share the museum building and programming. It also increased its online presence, including expanded use of new media. Since changing its mission, the museum has increased membership, found local partners, and increased grants and other funding.



*Komemma Canoe Project*