

Mary Oberst
First Lady



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Contacts:

Anna Richter Taylor: 503.378.6169

Jake Weigler: 503.378.6496

Christine D'Arcy, Oregon Arts Commission: 503-986-0087

First Lady Supports Cultural Revitalization Package
Funds to benefit Culture, Heritage, Arts, Movies and Public Broadcasting

Salem, Ore. – Today First Lady Mary Oberst called for the support of CHAMP, the cultural, heritage, arts, movies, historic preservation and public broadcasting programs included in Governor Ted Kulongoski's recommended budget for the 2007-09 biennium.

"Culture is an integral part of every Oregon community. CHAMP is an important step toward restoring and stabilizing funding for cultural agencies and programs that educate, create jobs, increase tourism, preserve our history, and inspire Oregonians in every region of the state," said Oberst.

"The CHAMP package has the Governor's strong support, and is in his recommended budget. And I am a CHAMP champion."

Oberst acknowledged that Oregon's cultural landscape suffered a severe drought in the course of the recent recession. State support for the Oregon Historical Society, responsible for the care and stewardship of Oregon's priceless artifacts and documents, was eliminated in 2003. Public funding for Oregon Public Broadcasting, which offers educational and cultural programs to rural residents as well as critical emergency alert services, was also eliminated. And the budget for the Oregon Arts Commission was cut in half, limiting important public grant funds to Oregon's flagship arts organizations.

New opportunities for Oregon's heritage and historic communities are also part of CHAMP. The proposed Main Street Program will help communities restore historic buildings, leverage private funds for downtown revitalization and stimulate heritage tourism.

The Governor’s budget includes cultural reinvestments for CHAMP totaling \$10.6 million:

Oregon Arts Commission Creative Oregon Initiative	\$2.9 million
Oregon Historical Society	\$2.8 million
Oregon Public Broadcasting	\$3.75 million
Oregon Film and Video Office	\$414,000
Oregon Main Street Program	\$750,000

CHAMP begins the important process of restoring public funding for Oregon’s important cultural resources. The real advantage of CHAMP, however, is the way it supports the interconnections between Oregon’s history, movie making, arts and public broadcasting. One collaboration underway between the Historical Society and OPB has resulted in production of the popular new history series, “The Oregon Experience.” Downtowns targeted by the new Main Street program frequently house the studios of artists and creative small businesses and are the locations for movies and commercials filmed in Oregon. And Oregon’s 1,200 cultural organizations provide important outreach programs for Oregon’s students and youth.

“CHAMP will also pay measurable dividends to Oregon citizens and the economy. The arts are critical to student learning. A vibrant cultural life attracts entrepreneurs, tourists, and new businesses. And we know that public investment in culture through the Cultural Trust is a powerful incentive for private donors,” noted Oberst.

“CHAMP also makes a statement about our values -- and who we are as a people. With CHAMP, every Oregonian is a winner,” concluded the First Lady.

For more information on the CHAMP Cultural Reinvestment Plan, visit the Governor’s website: <http://governor.oregon.gov>