



SOUTHERN OREGON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 1, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Salem OR 97301

RE: CREF Slate 2023-2025

Dear Co-chairs Sen. Fred Girod & Rep. Paul Holvey, and Members of the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction,

On behalf of the Southern Oregon Historical Society (SOHS), I am writing to respectfully request the support of you and your fellow committee members for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon's (CACO) 2023 Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) slate of capital construction projects.

SOHS owns two historic properties: the 1857 operating historic Hanley Farm (located in Central Point OR) and our 26,000 square foot National Landmark historic downtown Medford headquarters which was originally built by J. C. Penney in 1948. SOHS has owned this iconic building since 1988.

The CREF slate contains 16 endorsed projects among which is an allocation of \$500,000 for funds to assist SOHS in remodeling space in the Penney building into a public event center. This 26,000 sq. ft. building currently holds SOHS's public research library and our two-dimensional archives (maps, papers, photos, books, etc.) which support the library. However, the vast majority of this building's space is currently unused. A half-million or more 3-dimensional collection is stored in several other locations.

Since Medford's major downtown events facility closed shortly before the pandemic with no plans to reopen, Medford was left without a location for large scale business and private meetings and events. Converting our original Penney's sales floor space into a 350-person public event space will both fill an important community need as well as assist SOHS's own financial stability. This \$1.25 million project has been widely endorsed by both the City of Medford, the Chamber of Commerce of Medford and Jackson County and many other community institutions. Additionally, our entire bi-partisan Legislative delegation provided support letters to CACO seeking inclusion of our project in the CREF slate.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society has served Jackson County and southern Oregon for over 76 years. We hold one of the largest collections of historic materials in Oregon

and during our history have preserved and exhibited elements of our 1 million Collection items to honor, preserve and interpret our deep, compelling regional history for people of all ages (including established relationships with Jackson County's school districts). While the Event Center will directly serve broad community needs, income from the Event Center will also help support these SOHS programs for preservation and public interpretation of regional history.

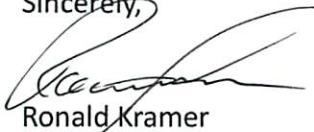
We have currently raised approximately \$225,000 toward this project and support from the CREF slate would not only place our total funding for it at nearly 60% but would be an important step in securing the remaining necessary community support.

The total CREF slate of 16 projects consists of extremely important investments in community projects which will provide increased access to the expansion of arts and culture in Oregon's communities along with corollary economic benefits.

I ask the committee to fund the full \$11.88M slate of CACO's endorsed projects.

Thank you for your kind consideration of the entire CREF slate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald Kramer', written over a white background.

Ronald Kramer
Executive Director