



Benton County Historical Society Strategic Plan 2014-2018

Introduction:

The Benton County Historical Society was formed in 1951 as the Benton County Pioneer Historical Society to preserve local history and cultural resources. When the Philomath College building in Philomath, Oregon was renovated in the late 1970s, the Society opened a museum in the National Register building in 1980. BCHS collected an extensive research archive and built a collection of art and historical artifacts, which were displayed to the public.

When the Horner Museum closed on the Oregon State University campus in 1995, the crucible of change was ignited for the Benton County Historical Society. Members of the community brought the Benton County Historical Society Trustees to OSU administrators with a plan to save the Horner Collection. OSU agreed to transfer the collection of 60,000 objects to BCHS when the Society could provide safe and secure storage for these important objects.

The Society went to work and purchased a piece of land in downtown Corvallis. At first the Society considered renovating the building on the property, but upon analysis it was deemed unsuitable. With funds raised, the Society built the Johnson Collections Center on their Philomath property and finally acquired the Horner Collection in 2008.

But, the project was far from complete: the Society's museum building in Philomath, a National Register of Historic Places property cannot not be altered to exhibit more objects. BCHS Trustees reinvigorated the idea of building a Corvallis Museum on part of their downtown property and hired Allied Works Architecture to design a modern museum. The Society is now raising funds for the Corvallis Museum & Cultural Center with a goal of opening to the public by the end of 2016. It is this course of events that guide our strategic plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our Mission: The Benton County Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation that operates museum facilities for the preservation of history and culture. Its mission is to:

1. Preserve the material and intellectual culture of Benton County, Oregon, by acquiring and caring for significant collections that illustrate and interpret the history of the area and its relationship to the world;
2. Enrich people's lives through exhibitions and educational programs.

Our Values:

Innovation: The Society is an innovative, catalytic force in the community.

Inclusiveness: Our museum is for the whole community, not just for historians.

Stewardship: We are committed to preserving important cultural resources.

Excellence: We strive to meet the highest standards of the museum profession.

OUR VISION:

The Benton County Historical Society is a leading cultural institution in the Willamette Valley.

Evidence of this vision:

The Benton County Historical Society operates facilities on two campuses, including a state-of-the-art museum in Corvallis, Oregon designed by Allied Works Architecture of Portland and New York; the Johnson Collections Center on the Philomath campus; a history research center in the Philomath College building, and meeting space in the Annex adjacent to the College building.

The Philomath College, built in 1867, is the Society's largest artifact. It serves as a history center offering researchers access to library, archives and collections for study and has gallery space for changing art exhibitions and community programs in Philomath, Oregon.

The Peter and Rosalie Johnson Collections Center in Philomath is a modern, purpose-built storage facility, providing ample storage space and stable environments for the collections of the Benton County Historical Society, which includes the Horner Collection, formerly housed in the Horner Museum on the Oregon State University campus.

The Society's Corvallis Museum and Cultural Center in downtown Corvallis, Oregon, is a community resource and tourist destination serving local, state, national and international visitors, and contributing to the economic vitality of the community and revitalization of the Corvallis riverfront district.

The visitor experience in the Corvallis Museum and Cultural Center is dynamic and innovative with opportunities to learn about new ideas, explore contemporary and historical topics, study artifacts, use interactive programs, view collections, and more.

An annual calendar of lively educational programs, changing exhibitions, and community activities provides a range of choices for different age groups and interests at all sites thereby generating the largest annual visitor and user numbers in the history of the organization.

Community partnerships have expanded Benton County Historical Society's ability to serve a wide cross-section of the region's population, build a more diverse constituency and make meaningful contributions to the lives of children, families and adults. The Corvallis Museum and Cultural Center works together with local cultural organizations to present programs and events.

A well-developed organizational infrastructure, diversified fundraising and earned income activities supported by a full-time staff provides financial stability and sustainability for the ongoing annual operating budget of the expanded Benton County Historical Society.

The Board of Trustees demonstrates exemplary leadership through institutional planning and fundraising efforts for organizational growth.