

Heritage center is expanding its mission with a new strategic plan

By Barbara Curtin

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It's official: The Willamette Heritage Center will broaden its mission in order to preserve and explain the heritage of Salem and Marion County.

The center's board unanimously accepted a draft strategic plan at its Wednesday meeting, according to Peter Booth, executive director. The three-year plan will take the nonprofit organization beyond its traditional role of explaining four pioneer-era buildings and the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill.

"The board was very pleased with our progress and very pleased with the road map laid out by the strategic plan and looking forward to the possibilities it will open up," Booth said.

The heritage center was created Jan. 1 from the merger of Mission Mill Museum and Marion County Historical Society, which share a site at 1313 Mill St. SE. A planning grant from the Oregon Community Foundation paid for outreach and development of the strategic plan with The Canoe Group of Portland.

One of the first noticeable differences, said Booth, is the art exhibit that opened Thursday, "Cultivating Creativity." It represents the heritage center's new effort to cooperate with other institutions — in this case, Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences.

In addition, the former historical society building at the rear of the property will be upgraded to give the public better access to the two institutions, Booth said.

The project is largely supported by recent grants from The Collins Foundation, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the Oregon Cultural Trust and the Oregon Heritage Commission.

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At a glance

What: Willamette Heritage Center, 1313 Mill St. SE

Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Mondays through Saturdays

Admission: \$6, \$5 ages 55 and older, \$4 students (with ID), \$3 for ages 6-17, free for children younger than 6; see website for \$1 off coupon

Learn more: (503) 585-7012 or www.missionmill.org