



**For Immediate Release  
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## **Wegner named Willamette Heritage Center executive director**

SALEM – The Willamette Heritage Center board of directors has named Samuel J. Wegner as the Center’s new executive director.

Wegner succeeds Peter Booth, who resigned in December 2012 to become executive director of a museum in Grand Junction, Colorado. John Hawkins has been serving as interim executive director since January.

“Sam brings almost 40 years of museum experience with him,” said Ted Stang, president of the Center’s board of directors. “We are looking forward to him leading our board and staff in charting a new direction for the WHC.”

Wegner will move to Salem this month and start his new duties on Sept. 3.

Most recently, Wegner served as executive director of the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina. Earlier, he was vice president of education and strategic planning of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, and society superintendent and state historic preservation officer of the State Historical Society of North Dakota in Bismarck, North Dakota.

This will not be his first work in Oregon. Between 1986 and 1996 he was executive director of the Southern Oregon Historical Society in Medford.

“I am very familiar with Oregon’s unique heritage,” he said, “and appreciate the history and significance of the Willamette Heritage Center (or Mission Mill Museum, as I remembered it). I look forward to playing an active role in preserving, promoting and interpreting WHC’s mission.”

Wegner, 61, earned a bachelor's degree in U. S. western history with a minor in museum studies at the University of Arizona and a master's degree in U. S. western history with a museum studies specialty at the University of Idaho.

He has more than 30 years of senior management experience, including nearly 25 years as chief executive officer.

The Willamette Heritage Center, a unification of Mission Mill Museum Association and Marion County Historical Society operates a five-acre campus that includes the 1841 Jason Lee house (arguably the oldest wooden framed house in Oregon), 1841 Willamette Mission Parsonage, 1847 John Boon home, 1858 Pleasant Grove Church and the 1896 Thomas Kay Woolen Mill, named an *American Treasure* by the National Park Service.

Since its founding in 1964 as a private non-profit association, Mission Mill Museum has established a reputation as a leader in the preservation and interpretation of Oregon's history. The museum's histories are shared with visitors through daily and group tours, speakers, living history, children's programs, hands-on activities, special events, the museum store and rental facilities.

For more information call 503-585-7012 or visit <http://www.willametteheritage.org>. The Willamette Heritage Center is a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is not managed by city, county, state or federal agencies.

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