

COMMENTARY

Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum Restoration Campaign

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Oregon's First Lady Mary Oberst is leading the campaign efforts to raise \$800,000 for the most critical restoration needs of the Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum.

Located in John Day, this 140-year-old historical treasure provides an unmatched glimpse into the life and culture of the early Chinese community in Oregon. Constructed in 1875 as a trading post, it evolved over the years to become the social, medical and religious center for the Chinese community in Eastern Oregon.

Housed in the original building in John Day, the Museum contains a vast collection of artifacts. Included in the artifacts are business and financial records, supplies, and ancient Chinese herbs and medicines, some dating back to the 1800s. Today, the Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum hosts 5,000 visitors per year, helping us to understand the integration of Oriental and Occidental cultures in the region.

The Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum faces significant restoration needs - to the building, its collection and to visitor services. A public/private partnership has formed to raise \$800,000 to address these most critical restoration needs by December 31, 2006. The campaign partners include the Oregon State Parks Trust, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum and the City of John Day. To date, a total of \$308,560 has been raised.

This campaign focuses on Phase I, the first three years of a comprehensive effort to restore the Museum and its collection. Specific activities include: opening a Visitor Center with exhibits and interpretive displays; development of the interpretive plan; making the most critical repairs to the Museum; and cataloguing the entire collection of artifacts:

	Budget Phase I 2004-2006	Phase II 2007-2010
<u>Interpretation & Visitor Services</u>		
Visitor Center (Remodel, Displays and Exhibits)	\$ 65,000	
Interpretive Plan (Planning, Development and Support)	\$ 81,000	
Interpretive Center (Permanent Displays and Exhibits)		\$ 150,000
<u>Restoration of Museum</u>		
Condition Assessment/Address Critical Needs	\$ 200,000	
Construction & Building Restoration (2007 - 2010 est.)		\$ 500,000
<u>Museum Collection & Presentation</u>		
Inventory (Assessment, Planning and Completion)	\$ 44,000	
Curation and Cataloguing of Collection	\$ 310,000	
Exhibit Development and Storage (Permanent)	\$ 100,000	\$ 75,000
Total Restoration Expenses	\$ 800,000	\$ 725,000

"Restoring Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum will preserve and protect this nationally significant resource and continue to provide public access to visitors from around the world who come to learn about the early Chinese way of life," said First Lady Mary Oberst, Campaign Chair.

The campaign is officially underway with the August opening of the new visitor center, a fundraising event hosted by Oregon's First Lady Mary Oberst, and the development of a campaign video. The campaign team is working hard to complete the leadership gift phase of the campaign. Thanks in large part to a new leadership gift from the Kinsman Foundation, we have raised over \$308,560 toward the goal!

This winter, conservation work at the Museum will focus on the fabric of the historic structure and improving the environmental and

building systems to safeguard the collection. Simultaneously, a consulting team from the High Desert Museum is assessing and addressing the immediate collection needs and guiding the design of the collection workroom and storage area in the new visitor center.

The goal of this project is to ensure that this unique 19th-century facility will continue to educate visitors about the importance of the Chinese immigrants whose influence and contributions so helped define the culture and history of the American West.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to preserve and restore the Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum or for more information call 1 -800-497-2757 or visit www.oregonstateparkstrust.org. Send donations to Oregon State Parks Trust, P.O. Box 581, Bend, OR 97709.