



# Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

Summer Newsletter

July 2015

## Paper mill donation kicks off grindstones fund drive

A bright, beautiful morning in June saw West Linn Paper Company Manager Brian Konen standing on the mill's bridge across the Locks to pass a giant \$3,000 check to representatives of the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation. The occasion? A quick ceremony designed to kick off the Foundation's long-awaited fundraising drive for a piece of public art that will memorialize the 125 years of mill work that built West Linn.

Sandy Carter, Foundation board member and originator of the 2007 Grindstones Public Art Project, joined Foundation President Jim Mattis and Board member Christine Steel in accepting the check which, along with a \$2,500 grant from the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition and another \$30,000 yet to be raised, will commission a sculpture of heroic scale incorporating four historic grindstones. The grindstones, donated by WLPC in 2006, are temporarily stored in Willamette Park by the volleyball court.

The sculpture represents the story of papermaking at Willamette Falls. The design uses three large logs jutting out from a grinding wheel and a symbolic sheet of paper at the end of the line. At its peak in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, nearly 2,000 employees labored at what was then the West Linn Crown Zellerbach mill and on the tugs and barges that supported the mill's shipping.



A maquette by artist John H. Davis depicts the art installation planned for Willamette Park. (Photo courtesy of Sandy Carter)

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Brian Konen hands donation to Sandy Carter, Christine Steel, and Jim Mattis. (Photo courtesy of West Linn Paper)

The Grindstones art is planned to anchor the Willamette Park terminus of the future West Linn Riverfront Greenway Trail. The trail, envisioned to eventually connect walkers to the Arch Bridge area, will feature interpretive kiosks explaining the ecology, geology, natural history and industrial heritage of that stretch of West Linn's riverfront, including the mill, the locks, the falls and fish ladder, and the generation of power from TW Sullivan, PGE's second hydropower plant. "More donations are needed," said Carter. "The time is now, and the mill's support of this project takes us that much closer to seeing this great project completed for future generations."

The Grindstones project was first conceived in 2007 when it became the City of West Linn's first Percent for Art award. Since then the artist was selected and the sculpture designed under the guidance of the Clackamas County Arts Alliance. Process on the project slowed while the design and construction schedule for the Willamette River Greenway trail (in West Linn's Willamette Park), along which the art will be located, was refined. The trail work will start in 2015.

The Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation has made completing the Grindstones project a top priority goal for 2015. Fund raising efforts have been ramped up and, if local cultural grants come through as hoped, the remaining cost will

almost be met. The Foundation is hoping to raise the remaining funds through private donations. If you would like to help, please see the donation form in this newsletter or visit the website at <http://www.willamettefalls.org>. For more information, call the Foundation at 503-650-9570.

## ***Legislative News***

### **Senate Joint Memorial 10 passes state legislature**

Oregon's first official state heritage area is on its way to becoming the state's first national heritage area.

SJM 10 passed the Oregon House by a vote of 50-9. It had previously passed the Senate unanimously, 30-0. This joint memorial urges Congress to pass legislation to restore and reopen the Willamette Falls Navigation Canal and Locks, to support and approve the HAC's National Heritage Area application later this year, and to facilitate revitalization of the Blue Heron site at the Falls. SJM 10 was passed in early May, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transfer of the locks from private hands to government ownership.

### **SB 131 passes Oregon Senate**

Senate Bill 131, which would establish a task force on the future of the Willamette Falls Locks, passed the Oregon Senate by unanimous vote on June 24.

The bill directs the task force to study issues relating to repair, reopening and operation of the canal and locks. It also requires the task force to make quarterly reports to the Legislative Assembly. It declares an emergency, effective on passage. Task force membership will include elected representatives from the state, the county, West Linn, Oregon City, several state departments, and citizen advocates.

## Willamette Falls and surrounding areas receive state's first heritage designation

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation's partner, the Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition, received news in April that its application for a first-of-its-kind State Heritage Area designation was approved by the Oregon Heritage Commission.

The unanimous vote came on the second day of the commission's 2015 conference at the Coos Historical & Maritime Museum in Coos Bay. The designation caps a nine-year effort by the Coalition to achieve recognition for 26 square miles of natural and historic areas of Oregon City, West Linn and Lake Oswego. The Coalition board, which includes Foundation board members Jim Mattis, Jody Carson, and Sandy Carter, hopes to help "lift the boats" of the many and varied heritage activities within that area.



Oregon City in 1867, showing Willamette Falls and flour mills. A sternwheeler is shown in the boat basin above the falls, and another sternwheeler is visible at the landing below the falls. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia)

## West Linn Old Time Fair

Be sure to come to the West Linn Old Time Fair to be held in Willamette Park on July 17-19. This year's theme is "A River Runs Through It," honoring Willamette Falls Locks. Fittingly, the

Foundation's board member and tireless advocate Sandy Carter will be the Old Time Fair Parade's Grand Marshal. Come early on Saturday morning to eat pancakes with the Lions, see the parade, enjoy the fair, and experience the special ambiance of being part of a history-rich, riverside community.

## Governor tours Riverwalk site

On May 29, Oregon Governor Kate Brown toured the site of the future Riverwalk on the Oregon City side of the Willamette Falls and announced the selection of Mayer/Reed, Snøhetta and DIALOG to design the project.



Governor Kate Brown speaks to crowd of local officials as Alice Norris, past mayor of OC and president of the WF Heritage Area Coalition, and Representative Brent Barton look on. (Photo courtesy of Sandy Carter)

Following the tour, a reception was held inside the foundation of the former Oregon City Woolen Mill. The design team will begin work this summer on the schematic design. They envision an experientially-rich Riverwalk that not only accesses the magnetic power of the Willamette River, but also courses through time, stitching together the natural and cultural histories embedded within the Blue Heron site.

The Riverwalk design effort will span an 18-month process that will lead the Willamette Falls Partners towards final construction drawings and the first phase of Riverwalk construction. Now that the design team is on board, Willamette Falls Legacy Project's first major public event will be held July 25th at the First City Celebration in downtown Oregon City.

## President's Message

The Foundation is particularly pleased that one of its founders, Sandy Carter, will be the Grand Marshal in the West Linn Old Time Fair parade. Board members and friends of the Foundation will be marching in the parade with banners and flags urging support for Sandy's outstanding work in preserving the industrial heritage of the Falls area and particularly the 142-year-old Willamette Falls Locks. Now, of course, her efforts are focused on getting the Locks restored and reopened and ownership transferred from the Corp of Engineers into the hands of a local entity or partnership of entities. Please consider joining us in the parade. Call the Foundation's voice mail box (503-650 9570) or send us an e-mail and we will get back to you with the details.

## New interpretive sign overlooks the Falls

Have you ever stopped at (or driven by) the viewpoint just south of Oregon City on Highway 99E and wondered just what you were looking at? Now some help and explanation have arrived, thanks to an interpretive sign that was placed on June 18 by the Oregon Department of Transportation and PGE.



From left: George Kramer, historian; Deb Schallert, retired PGE cultural resources staff; Sandy Carter and Jody Carson, WFHF members of the PGE committee that designed the sign. (Photo courtesy of Sandy Carter)

### WHO WE ARE

We are partners, stewards and advocates of the culture and heritage at Willamette Falls. Our mission is: To preserve and promote awareness of the magnificence and history at Willamette Falls so that it will live in the minds and imaginations of people of all ages.

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*Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit Oregon corporation established for educational purposes and heritage preservation.*

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