

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM



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Contacts: Heidi Hagemeyer, Director of Communications, High Desert Museum, 541-382-4754, ext. 166, hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org

Chantal Strobel, Communications & Development Manager, Deschutes Public Library, 541-312-1031, chantals@deschuteslibrary.org

High Desert Museum and Deschutes Public Library receive federal grant to enhance programs

Institute of Museum and Library Services grants offered in response to COVID-19 pandemic

BEND, OR — The High Desert Museum and Deschutes Public Library System have received a \$373,413 Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant to create programs and resources for those most impacted in the region by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The collaborative effort will enable the museum and the library system to offer family-centered programs. These programs will be designed to advance STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning, literacy and the social-emotional skills necessary for academic and career success among pre-K-12 students. Additionally, the programs will involve distribution of tablets with data plans to help bridge the digital divide and facilitate longer-term engagement with museum and library resources online.

The goal of the two-year grant is to serve approximately 2,000 families. Roughly \$246,000 of the grant will go to the High Desert Museum, with about \$107,000 going to the Deschutes Public Library and the remainder going to other partners participating in the project.

“There is significant demand nationwide for this support, so we’re honored to be selected in such a highly competitive process,” said High Desert Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “We’re excited to be able to enhance our educational options and help meet needs in the region. And the Deschutes Public Library as an ideal partner for this work.”

The funding comes from the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act, the federal economic stabilization legislation signed into law in March. The IMLS received \$50 million in emergency funding to help museums and libraries meet the needs of the communities they serve.

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“We know that great things are possible when we work together, and this grant is a testament to that,” said Library Director Todd Dunkelberg. “We are grateful for the opportunity to further serve young people and families in our community. This is the largest IMLS grant of this type awarded in Oregon, and we are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work with the High Desert Museum to help improve the lives of people in Central Oregon.”

The IMLS announced the awarding of \$13.8 million in grants to organizations nationwide on September 24. The federal agency received more than 1,700 applications requesting more than \$409 million in funding. Of those, 68 applicants were awarded grants.

In a news release announcing the grant awards, IMLS Director Crosby Kemper spoke to the importance of museums and libraries during this time.

“We’ve seen unprecedented need expressed by museums and libraries on behalf of their organizations and communities, and many are on the brink—financially, emotionally, and otherwise,” Kemper said. “While the pandemic’s widespread impact has changed how museums and libraries engage with their communities, it has not stopped them from providing information, education, support, entertainment, and other incredible resources. We deeply appreciate the work that museums and libraries are doing as they continue their missions in the face of hardship.”

ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in Bend, Oregon in 1982. It brings together wildlife, cultures, art, history and the natural world to convey the wonder of North America’s High Desert. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate this diverse region. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is a Smithsonian Affiliate, was a 2018 finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services and is the 2019 recipient of the Western Museums Association’s Charles Redd Award for Exhibition Excellence. highdesertmuseum.org

ABOUT THE LIBRARY:

The DESCHUTES PUBLIC LIBRARY celebrates its centennial anniversary in 2020. Located in the high desert of Central Oregon, the Library serves more than 200,000 Deschutes County residents through its locations in Bend, La Pine, Redmond, Sisters and Sunriver. In addition, the Library’s website (www.deschuteslibrary.org) provides access to thousands of resources—including eBooks, streaming movies, magazine articles, and more—all from the comfort of home and work. Free and dynamic cultural programming for all ages is available online to enrich our daily experience and encourage all residents to Know More.

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