

# Legislature to consider relief for arts

Arts organizations across the state — including those in Sisters — have been heavily impacted by the shut-down in place to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Nonprofit cultural organizations in Sisters across the state have canceled performances, events and activities — including key fundraising events — and most have closed their doors to the public.

In response to communication from the Oregon Cultural Trust, its Statewide Partners and arts and cultural organizations across the state, Governor Kate Brown directed the agency to explore opportunities to identify relief funding to address the devastating impact the COVID-19 health crisis is having on Oregon's arts and cultural community.

As of March 24, 423 Oregon cultural organizations had already reported financial losses to-date of \$8,611,881 with data still being collected from more than 1,000 organizations. The loss of projected earned income, lifeblood for most cultural organizations, has

already resulted in significant layoffs and furloughs, with many more to come if relief doesn't arrive soon. Many organizations are already facing bankruptcy and permanent closure.

In addition, cancellations of events and programming, as well as school closures, have adversely affected hundreds of artists and cultural workers whose livelihoods depend on income from teaching, performing and participating in cultural activities.

Following consultation with the Governor's Office, Business Oregon and its Statewide Partners, including sister agency the Oregon Arts Commission, the Cultural Trust Board of Directors held an emergency meeting on Saturday, March 21, and unanimously voted to use up to \$10 million of its \$29 million permanent fund to create an emergency relief funding program.

Because the current Cultural Trust statute does not contain a provision for emergency relief funding, the program requires

approval by the Oregon Legislature. A concept for consideration by the Legislature is being developed and will be presented during an anticipated special session within the next few weeks. The Cultural Trust will convene a committee of stakeholders to fully and quickly develop and implement an emergency funding program that is equitable and easy to use to expedite funding.

In a news release, The Oregon Cultural Trust stated that the Trust's "permanent fund was created by the Legislature to protect Oregon's cultural organizations for future generations. That future is currently at dire risk.

"The Cultural Trust Board of Directors respects and honors the commitment that thousands of Trust donors have made with their contributions to the permanent fund. It is the Board's sincere hope that donors will respect that, at this unprecedented time in Oregon history, the funds will be used exactly as they were intended: To protect the future of Oregon culture."

# Foundation seeks permit for arts on ranch

The Roundhouse Foundation merges ranching and the arts at Pine Meadow Ranch at the southwest end of Sisters. The Foundation is now seeking to expand facilities on the ranch.

Deschutes County provided notice that the foundation is seeking a conditional use permit and site plan review to establish a "community center" on the ranch and to add a 2,499-square-foot expansion to the ranch shop.

The community center will, according to the application, "continue and expand agricultural operations on the subject property, such as refining farming practices and identifying conservation efforts for onsite natural resources."

The foundation will also host an artist-in-residency program at the community center, using two existing homes on the ranch, with the shop serving both agricultural production and as artists' studio space.

"Guest artists will be invited to live on the subject

property to pursue creative pursuits while assisting in ranch operations and other onsite agricultural activities," the county notice reads.

Erin Borla, a trustee of The Roundhouse Foundation, told *The Nugget* that, "It's a way to preserve that space and hopefully boost the arts economy of Sisters."

Borla said that artists-in-residence will work with local artists and on local projects as well as their own work.

"They'll all be required to do some work on the ranch while they're there, so they're giving back," Borla said. "We want this to be a gift to the community by preserving this special space."

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The Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Central Oregon Chambers of Commerce and businesses, have sponsored a website to give small businesses resources, information and connections.

The website, developed by Oregon State University, provides COVID-related information and small business resources.

**Please visit [www.CentralOregonSOS.com](http://www.CentralOregonSOS.com)**

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