

Exhibit: Images taken by survey teams show the West before migration

Continued from page 1

landscape in their negative plates as accurately as they could.

"These photographs have been used to make us more aware of the fragility and the usefulness of the landscape," said museum director David Turner, who curates the exhibition. "Therefore, they are advocating an idea that we should take care of the landscape because it's so beautiful and because it's so fragile."

The exhibition consists of three

sections: the early expeditions into the West, the Sierra Club publications and the contemporary artists' landscape photographs.

In the 19th century, a series of survey teams were sent out West to explore the new frontier, driven by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. A photographer accompanied each survey team. Three of those photographers were Timothy O'Sullivan, renowned for his Civil War photographs; William Henry Jackson; and Carleton E.

Watkins, whose works are displayed in the show.

"There was an idea, as photographers came out here, that they were going to find something like a Garden of Eden that had not been explored and touched much," Turner said.

"Do you really see a Garden of Eden? No. You find there have been populations for thousands of years already. When you look at those beautiful landscape pictures, you can find something in nature that really ele-

vates you beyond this world. You would see, well, it still looks like a Garden of Eden. You feel like you touch some ground that maybe people have not walked on before," Turner said.

The 19th-century photographs serve as records of the architecture and the living conditions of native inhabitants as well as the landscape of the West before mass migration began, according to the museum.

The highlights of the show are the works of Ansel Adams, who pioneered

modern landscape photography, and Eliot Porter. Both photographers devoted their lives to preserve the beauty and the wilderness of the landscape. Through publications and lobbying of the Sierra Club, they influenced federal policies to set aside vulnerable and fragile lands such as Yosemite and the Glen Canyon for National Parks.

Following the spirit of the advocacy for the land, three contemporary photographers, Mary Peck, Mark Abrahamson and Robert Adams, illuminate the changing nature of the landscapes.

The collection includes a view camera and a stereopticon, a 19th-century device that provides users with a three-dimensional view, using two pictures of the same image from slightly different angles, captured by a twin-lens camera.

Among subjects of the featured photographs is not only majestic and beautiful scenery but also human development of the land, such as building railroads and mining hills.

Turner said, pointing out a photograph of a damaged fishing creek under a bridge construction site, there are no simple and conclusive answers about the use of the land.

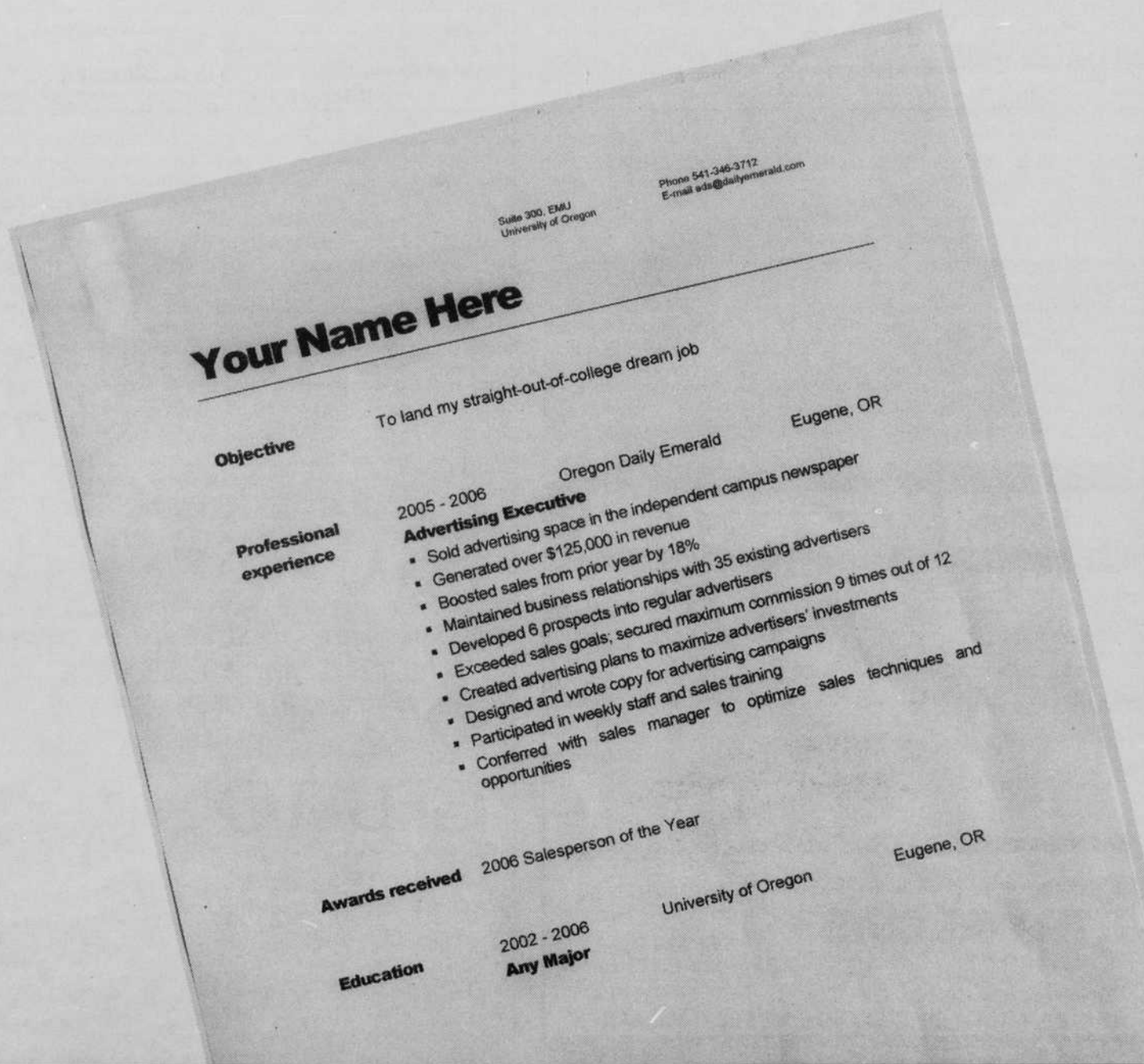
"What they are really advocating for us to do is to think about what's happening out there. And then we've got to decide which is the right way to guide the use of the landscape. I think you have to measure the pros and cons and make the best decision you can."

Over the summer, the museum is open Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Turner will deliver a gallery talk July 20 at 6 p.m.

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