

New Oregon Crime Victims Law Center Opens

Law center will provide representation to crime victims and ensure victims' rights

The National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI), located in Portland, recently announced a \$100,000, 12-month grant to the new Oregon Crime Victims Law Center to support the center's representation of crime victims in the criminal justice process and other law center work.

The grant is part of a national effort by NCVLI, funded by a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, to create a national network of free legal services for crime victims.

The law center will provide free legal representation and support to Oregon victims as they assert and seek enforcement

of their rights in Oregon's state, federal and Tribal criminal courts.

Organized as an Oregon public benefit non-profit corporation, the law center began operations Aug. 4, 2009.

The law center's funding by NCVLI follows two major Oregon developments related to victims of crime: the people's May 2008 approval of amendments to the Oregon Constitution making crime victims' constitutional rights judicially enforceable and the 2009 Oregon Legislature's enactment of law (Senate Bill 233) detailing the procedures for victims' rights compliance and enforcement.

The NCVLI grant makes Oregon one of 12 law centers for crime victims'

rights representation and related services supported by NCVLI.

"We are very pleased that NCVLI can help make possible this important new resource for Oregon victims of crime," said Meg Garvin, NCVLI's executive director.

"Oregonians can be very proud of our state's progress as to crime victims' rights," said Janine Robben, Portland attorney and former prosecutor, who is the law center's executive director. "The law center begins a major new chapter of that progress."

In carrying out its work, the law center will collaborate closely with NCVLI and will seek to form working alliances

with numerous other organizations supportive of victims' rights and to utilize many existing public and private networks of communication.

Robben will be joined by a half-time victim advocate in October. The law center has a nine-member board of directors headed by former Attorney General Hardy Myers as president; Steve Doell, president of Crime Victims United, as vice-president; and Portland attorney Erin Olson as secretary-treasurer.

The Law Center office is in Suite 612, Board of Trade Building, 310 SW Fourth Ave., Portland, OR 97204; 503-208-8160, fax 503-935-5880; and e-mail janine@ocvlc.org.

Two Oregon High School Students to be Selected to Spend a Week in Washington, Plus Earn \$5,000 Scholarship

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley have announced that the U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP) has begun its statewide selection process. The two Oregon students will join 102 other delegates March 6-13, 2010, for the program's 48th Annual Washington Week.

The program was established in 1962 by Senate Resolution 324, which resolved: "That the Senate hereby expresses its willingness to cooperate in a nationwide competitive high school program which would give several representative high school students from each state a short indoctrination into the operation of the United States Senate and the Federal Government generally, if such a program can be satisfactorily arranged and completely supported by private funds with no expense to the Federal Government."

Since inception, more than 4,700 students have participated in this unique leadership education program sponsored

each year by the U.S. Senate and fully funded and administered by The Hearst Foundations – no government funds are utilized.

The Oregon selection deadline is Oct. 2, 2009. Names of students selected will be formally announced in mid-December.

The centerpiece of the program is Washington Week, when the USSYP brings two students from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity to Washington for an intensive learning experience about the Senate and the federal government overall.

The students meet and have direct interaction with the highest level government officials in the nation, including the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, several U.S. senators, cabinet secretaries and other policy-makers.

In addition to outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer service, the students rank academically

in the top 1 percent of their states. They continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service.

Each of the 104 student delegates will receive a \$5,000 undergraduate college scholarship in addition to the all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital.

The student delegates will tour Capitol Hill, the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Supreme Court and other historic and educational sites in Washington, D.C.

The delegate selection is administered by each state's chief school officer in cooperation with high school principals and guidance counselors. Delegates must be junior or senior elected student officers for the 2009-2010 academic year and reside in the state where they attend school.

Eligibility considerations also may be made for student representatives elected or selected (selected by a panel, commission or board) to district, regional or state-level civic or educational organizations.

Each student must be a permanent resident of the United States and currently enrolled in a public or private secondary school located in the state (including for these purposes the District of Columbia) in which either one of his or her parents or guardians legally resides.

Exceptions to the residency rule are made for the Department of Defense Education Activity and for states with schools under interstate compacts.

Interested students in Oregon should contact their high school principal or the state-level selection administrator, which in Oregon is Heidi Schulze, manager and executive support to Nancy Latini, Ph.D., Oregon Department of Education, 255 Capitol St. NE, Salem, OR 97310-0203; 503-947-5661; Heidi.Schulze@state.or.us.

The 2010 program brochure with detailed rules, selection process and the annual yearbook can be accessed on the USSYP website at www.ussenateyouth.org.

USDA Announces First National Sign-up for New Conservation Stewardship Program

WASHINGTON – Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan recently announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has begun continuous sign-up for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), with the first sign-up period cutoff scheduled for Sept. 30.

CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations.

"This program will help the nation's agricultural and forestry producers reach greater levels of conservation performance, which will help protect our land and water," Merrigan said. "The conservation benefits derived from maintaining and enhancing natural resources will improve the quality of soil and water, assist in addressing global climate change and

encourage environmentally responsible energy production."

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) authorizes CSP. Congress renamed and completely revamped the former Conservation Security Program to improve its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry producers.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers CSP. Eligible lands include agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian Tribe, cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial private forestland (a new land use for the program).

Eligible applicants can include Indian Tribes, individual landowners and legal entities. The program will be offered to producers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Pacific and Caribbean areas.

Agricultural and forestry producers must submit applications by Sept. 30 to be considered for funding in the first ranking period. Congress capped the annual acreage enrollment at 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year nationwide.

To apply for the newly revamped CSP, potential participants are encouraged to use a self-screening checklist first to determine whether the new program is suitable for them or their operation. It is available on NRCS Web sites and at NRCS field offices.

After self-screening, the producer's current and proposed conservation practices are entered in the conservation measurement tool (CMT). This tool estimates the level of environmental performance to be achieved by a producer implementing and maintaining conservation activity. The conservation performance estimated by the CMT will be used to rank applications.

States will determine their own priority resource concerns, one of the criteria that will be used to rank applications. States will establish ranking pools to rank applications with similar resource concerns.

NRCS field staff also will conduct on-site field verifications of applicants' information obtained from the CMT. Once the potential participant has been field verified and approved for funding, he or she must develop a conservation stewardship plan.

For information about CSP, including eligibility requirements, producers can visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp or visit their local NRCS field office.

USDA is finalizing the program's policies and procedures. The CSP interim final rule, published in the Federal Register, is open for public comment through Sept. 28.