

Lightship: Coalition touted economic impacts of investment in the arts

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restoration was chosen in part for a geographic distribution of projects around the state.

The coalition is also asking the Legislature for \$1 million to help build the \$78 million Mark Rothko Pavilion at the Portland Art Museum, \$750,000 to help refurbish parts of the historic African American logging camp of Maxville in Wallowa County, \$750,000 to help the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians build a new cultural center, \$600,000 to expand the Liberty Theatre in North Bend and \$295,000 to renovate the Orpheum Theatre in Baker City.

“The organizations behind these projects have all demonstrated commitment and momentum in their endeavor and are ready to engage in the collective advocacy necessary for success of the entire slate,” Isaac Marquez, the chairman of the coalition’s capital construction committee and Eugene’s cultural services director, said in a news release.

The maritime museum has never had a project endorsed by the coalition, Johnson said, and has gone to Salem before trying to get money for the lightship.

“I think they understand how the politics work at the state capital,” Johnson said of the coalition. “So we would have, in some ways, a much better chance of getting funding from the state than if we were to go by ourselves.”

Gov. Kate Brown is expected to issue her proposed budget in December. The Legislature will approve a new biennial budget by the end of June.

Lottery money
Whether money for the cultural projects will be available is up in the air, with much of it tied to state lottery bonds. Steep drops in lottery revenues killed the sale of \$237 million worth of lottery



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
ABOVE: The radio room on the Lightship Columbia is closed to the public. **LEFT:** Pipes on the engine of the 70-year-old Lightship Columbia show signs of wear and rust.

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Isaac Marquez | chairman of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition’s capital construction committee

bonds in July, along with the funding for 37 infrastructure and affordable housing projects around the state.
Two previously endorsed projects, the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton and the Lincoln County Cultural Center, each received \$1.5 million lottery-backed

bond funding last year but had their money pulled because of the faltering economy. The coalition urged the state to prioritize those projects in the coming biennium.
The coalition has touted the economic impacts of investment in the arts, noting an Americans for the

Arts study that credited Oregon’s arts and culture sector with adding \$687 million and 22,299 jobs to the state’s economy in 2015.
“Our slate of projects will help boost local economies, especially as travel trends have changed and Oregonians are looking for more ways to

enrich their lives closer to home,” Marquez said.
Paul Cosgrove, a lobbyist for the coalition, was bullish on the coalition’s ability to get the funding.
“Oregon’s economy in much of the state — the rural areas not so much — was as strong as it ever had been

before (coronavirus), and the state economist believes that our recovery is likely to be reasonably rapid, although things are uncertain,” he said. “As the economy improves, state revenues become more stable, and funding these priorities becomes more achievable.”

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