



## PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Susan Tissot has announced her resignation as the Executive Director of the Coos History Museum.

Tissot, who worked at the CHM two years and two months, stated that her last day will be Jan. 31.

In a Jan. 2 letter to Coos County Historical Society President Carol Ventgen, Tissot outlined her reasoning, stating, "it is with a heavy heart and due to personal and family reasons that I submit my resignation...."

"I did not make this decision easily," Tissot wrote. "I have struggled with this decision for a number of months." She'll be returning to northern California.

Tissot emphasized several points. The Museum Board of Directors is putting together a search committee to hire a new museum professional. She noted that an interim director will be on board in the meantime. Any questions should be directed to Ventgen at the Museum by calling: 541-756-6320.

Additionally, she notified board members, staff and volunteers first of her resignation out of courtesy before the public. Tissot expressed her gratitude to the approximately 100 volunteers, saying they play a huge role in the CHM's success.

"They are a central part of the team," the Executive Director said.

Ventgen thanked Tissot for her service to the Museum.

"You've made a difference," Ventgen said.

The CCHS President said that the museum's motto was "This is your museum," adding that under Tissot's leadership, she said this has become a reality.

Ventgen said Tissot leaves the museum poised to continue its further success and that will be built upon by the new Coos Bay Village.

Tissot reflected on her own tenure at the Museum.

"I came into the organization at a time when the new museum building had only been open 15 months," she said.

Gov. Kate Brown was present for the building's dedication Sept. 9, 2015, and former Executive Director Frank Smoot resigned the following April.

Executive Director Tissot said "we needed to focus on getting our public programming up off the ground."

She listed several examples of this. One was the "First Tuesday Talks Lecture Series". Tissot also started the Women's History Month luncheon, the Second Sunday Family Free Day, with her most recent exhibition "Vet Ink: Tattoos Inspired by Military Service." "Vet Ink" lasts through August 2019. "Vet Ink," which features tattoos inspired by community people who've served,

opened in October 2018. More than 8,000 veterans live in Coos County and Tissot said it's critically important to honor them and provide an opportunity for veterans to share their stories. Tissot's also been active with board member Steve Greif on the building's exterior interpretive signs.

Referring specifically to the Family Free Days, she noted the role museums play in our society. "I think that museums make a real difference in people's lives," Tissot said, adding that she "wants to make sure (we) don't have any barriers economically."

Tissot stressed that it's important that "this museum or any museum is relevant and accessible." "The museum is not just here to preserve objects. We're also here to play an engaging role in the community."

Tissot said museum staff and she have made it a priority to "spend our money locally."

"I talk about that every time I give a talk. I made sure that we spent museum dollars in the community," the executive director said.

Tissot continued in her January 2 resignation letter to Ventgen by stating the following.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time leading the organization, the opportunity it provided me to get to know everyone I have worked with and the numerous programs we have produced for the public benefit during my two years at the museum," she wrote. "Please understand that my resignation is in no way a negative reflection on the museum, the board, staff, volunteers or the greater community."

Locally, Tissot volunteered on the Coos County Cultural Coalition Board of Directors and is a member of the Coos Bay/North Bend Rotary Club.

Tissot has a master's degree in museum studies and a bachelor's degree in anthropology, both from Oregon State University. She possesses 32 years of museum experience, with 19 years of those working as an executive director, including at the Clark County Historical Society & Museum, in Vancouver, Wash. She is co-author of *Planning for Tourists: Contributions of Museums*.

### **About the Coos History Museum:**

**The Coos History Museum creates a better understanding of life in Coos County and Oregon's South Coast, past and present. The Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and receives no direct government support. The museum is supported by donations, memberships, grants, museum store sales, special event rentals, and legacy/bequest gifts. The Coos History Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10am to 5pm, with additional evening hours on the First Tuesdays of February to June, and August to December, from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. Second Sunday of each month is a FREE ADMISSION DAY. General admission to the Coos History Museum is free for CHM members, active duty military, and NARM members. The Coos History Museum is a Member of the North American Reciprocal Museum Association, the American Alliance of Museums, and the American Association for State and Local History. The Coos History Museum is located on the waterfront along Highway 101, adjacent to downtown Coos Bay, at 1210 North Front Street, Coos Bay, Oregon. For more information, contact the Coos History Museum at 541-756-6320 or visit the website at [www.cooshistory.org](http://www.cooshistory.org).**

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