

February 4, 2008

Media contact: Patricia Feeny 503-945-9073

Program contact: Linda Hammond 503-945-2920

State hosts community meeting on mental hospital replacement project

This month the citizens of Salem will have an opportunity to help shape the future of Oregon's mental health system.

The Oregon Department of Human Services is holding a community forum **Wednesday, Feb. 13, at the Salem Conference Center from 5 to 8 p.m.** to provide information and solicit input on the Oregon State Hospital replacement project.

“As the current and future home to the state hospital for Oregonians who have a mental illness, the inclusion of the Salem community is important to this planning process,” Dr. Bruce Goldberg, DHS director, said. “This is really a historic opportunity for the City of Salem and the State of Oregon to work together and grow a community mental health system to serve Oregonians now and in the future.”

The 2007 Legislature authorized \$458.1 million to build two state-of-the-art psychiatric facilities to replace the existing hospital – a 620-patient hospital in Salem and a 360-patient hospital in Junction City. More than a dozen sites were reviewed, but these two best met the selection criteria developed by a legislative committee. Committee members included Sen. Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem.

To date, DHS has enlisted expertise from renowned architectural, construction and engineering firms, but the scale, design and configuration of the new Salem facility have not been determined, said Linda Hammond, administrator of the OSH Replacement Project.

“We are at a critical point in the planning process and we want to give the greater Salem community another opportunity to offer ideas and suggestions,” said Hammond. “We will continue to work tirelessly to make

this an open, collaborative process and, with the city's help, revitalize this great state property.”

Construction of the Salem facility is scheduled to begin in 2008, with completion scheduled for 2011.

“The door of change has opened at the Oregon State Hospital,” said Salem Mayor Janet Taylor. “It is imperative that we enter that door and become a partner in the process of modernizing this critical health care institution.”

Taylor and Hammond both encourage interested members of the public to attend the February 13 public forum to learn more and discuss the future of the new Oregon State Hospital in Salem.

For more information about the replacement project, including reports from mental health experts, architects and engineers, go to <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/HRP/>

###