



## **Oregon 150's "Activate Oregon" to continue under OSU 4-H Youth Development Program**

Press Release

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CORVALLIS, Ore. — Oregon State University has been chosen to continue the visioning and community action program initiated in 2009 by Oregon teens through “Project 2059: Activate Oregon.”

Oregon 150, which was created to celebrate Oregon's sesquicentennial, will disband September 30, 2009 and transfer its successful youth leadership pilot program to the OSU 4-H Youth Development Program.

"With its existing youth programs and statewide community network, OSU 4-H is a wonderful platform to launch the next phase of this project to engage Oregon's youth," said Melisa McDonald, executive director of Oregon 150. By assuming responsibility to nurture Project 2059, McDonald noted that Oregon 4-H is "the perfect partner to help support the next generation of Oregon leaders."

“Project 2059: Activate Oregon” is a signature project of Oregon 150 that gives Oregon youth opportunities to envision changes in Oregon by 2059. During Phase I of the project, Oregon 150 reached out to youth via a discovery road trip to 43 high schools across the state, issued an online survey and developed a social networking website, [www.project2059.com](http://www.project2059.com).

With feedback from Phase I, Oregon 150 organized "Activate Oregon," a two-and-a-half day leadership summit at Willamette University August 6–8. In Phase II, Oregon high school students submitted vision statements for Oregon's future; 65 students from across the state produced individual and group action plans to change Oregon's educational, economic and environmental future.

In upcoming weeks, Oregon 4-H will begin the process of assembling a leadership team for the project and begin planning for a second “Activate Oregon” leadership summit in 2010. 4-H personnel located across the state of Oregon will engage with existing youth leadership groups and 4-H clubs to catalyze local actions focused on education, the economy, and the environment.

"4-H operates from the assumption that young people are important assets to their communities and that their voices and action are the catalysts for meaningful community change," said Roger Rennekamp, head of the Department of Youth Development Education at Oregon State University. "Their engagement in the affairs of their communities and the broader society are essential to ensuring a positive future for our state."

Marilyn Lesmeister, civic engagement specialist for Oregon 4-H, sees Project 2059 as a way to build leadership skills among youth through real-world experience. "Communities are living laboratories where young people can use their energy and talents in positive ways. When young people see that their actions matter, they are more likely to remain civically engaged over their lifetime."

4-H is Oregon State University's largest youth development program, reaching more than 150,000 young people through county Extension offices across Oregon. 4-H helps young people learn and grow through a process that builds competence, confidence, connection, compassion and character. Young people prepare for economic and social success as adults while making positive contributions to their communities.

To find out more about the future plans for Project 2059 visit [www.project2059.com](http://www.project2059.com) or contact Oregon 4-H at 541-737-2421.

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