



Take Care of Oregon Days
Media Release
June 19, 2009

**Record Volunteer Numbers Turn Out to
“Take Care of Oregon” throughout May, 2009**

- *Over 600 statewide service projects commemorated Oregon’s sesquicentennial –*

PORTLAND, Ore. (June 18, 2009) — Over 24,000 participants rolled up their sleeves this May for Oregon’s largest volunteer event. One of six signature projects planned by Oregon 150 to commemorate Oregon’s 150th year of statehood, the “Take Care of Oregon Days” project spanned all 36 counties and involved over 11,000 student volunteers. Governor Kulongoski, who helped clear invasive species at the Mill Creek clean-up project in Salem, said “There is no better way to honor our sesquicentennial than volunteering to serve the state we love. That’s what Take Care of Oregon Days is all about – pulling together as Oregonians to build our communities, protect our quality of life, and create an Oregon that in 2059, our bicentennial year, will be even stronger than the remarkable place we celebrate today.”

The “Take Care of Oregon Days” project was commissioned by Oregon 150, the non-profit organization created by Governor Kulongoski to plan and implement Oregon’s sesquicentennial celebration. This month-long community service project was organized in collaboration with SOLV, Oregon Volunteers and Rural Development Initiative. The project team worked with Oregon cities, counties, non-profit groups, and public agencies to create meaningful and engaging opportunities to get involved. “From habitat restoration to service-learning projects in schools to citywide beautification projects to organized food drives, Oregonians answered the call to give back to their communities,” said Mary Oberst, Oregon’s First Lady and Chair of the Board of Oregon 150. Ms. Oberst, who joined volunteers working in Ontario and Nyssa on May 16th, added “During these challenging times, Oregonians looked to each other to find inspiration and lend a helping hand. What a great way to commemorate statehood.”

The Take Care of Oregon Days campaign exceeded its goal of having 500 projects and 20,000 volunteers improve the quality of life for everyone throughout the month of May. A final report will be drafted by SOLV detailing the project’s accomplishments and will be posted on www.oregon150.org. Some project statistics include:

- Total number of sites: 630
- Number of volunteers: 24,487
- Number of students: 11,235
- Pounds of trash removed: 723,024
- Pounds of invasive weeds removed: 376,312

“On behalf of the Oregon 150 Board of Directors, I wish to extend a giant ‘thank you’ to all the volunteer coordinators, volunteers, and project sponsors who made ‘Take Care of Oregon Days’ a resounding success,” said Melisa McDonald, Executive Director of Oregon 150. “Oregonians have demonstrated that by working together, any goal is achievable.”

This came as no surprise to SOLV coordinator Sara Ryan. “Oregonians are known for jumping in to make a difference in their communities,” Ms. Ryan said. “Given the special celebration of Oregon State’s 150th birthday, they came out in force – very Oregonian!” Kathleen Joy, Executive Director of Oregon Volunteers!, noted the special contributions from the RSVP programs and Volunteer Centers along the I-5 corridor, including the Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas County RSVPs, as well as the Lane County Volunteer Center, and the Linn-Benton Vision Volunteer & Mentor Center of Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties.

The Take Care of Oregon Days project was a true collaboration that relied upon motivated volunteers across the state. Laurel MacMillan, Take Care of Oregon coordinator from Rural Development Initiatives, observed “This project showcased the spirit of Oregon. I met with many wonderful people from all over rural Oregon who wanted to give back to the state they love by organizing projects to better their communities, from downtown cleanups in Echo to creating new welcome signs in Ontario. The 600 plus project coordinators are the real champions of Take Care of Oregon Days.”

Photos documenting the May activities can be viewed at <http://www.oregon150.org/projects/take-care-of-oregon/take-care-of-oregon-photos/>.

Oregon 150 wishes to thank the following sponsors of the Take Care of Oregon Days project:

Spirit Mountain Community Fund
Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund
Standard Insurance
PGE Foundation
CH2M HILL
Oregon Association of Realtors
Ashgrove
and
Hotel deLuxe & Hotel Lucia

About Oregon 150: Oregon 150 is the non-profit organization whose volunteer board of directors was appointed by the Governor to plan this year’s nine-month sesquicentennial celebration. The organization receives no General Fund dollars and has been dependent on private fundraising for its signature programs and activities after receiving support from the Governor and Legislature in the 2005 and 2007 biennium in the form of Lottery dollars. These funds were used to help build the organization and cover early operating expenses.

Oregon 150’s Visionaries Circle sponsors include Phil and Penny Knight, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Hotel deLuxe/Hotel Lucia, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, PGE, and NW Natural. For a full list of Oregon 150 sponsors, please visit the sponsor page of the website at www.oregon150.org/donate/sponsors/. In addition, an online store was launched February 14, 2009 at www.oregon150.org to sell sesquicentennial merchandise to support its efforts.

Oregon 150 now has more than 100 Official Partners across the state that have planned sesquicentennial activities. Recent additions include Baker County, Salem's Multicultural Institute, and the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization.

About SOLV: *Founded in 1969 by Oregon Governor Tom McCall and other community leaders, SOLV's mission is to build community through volunteer action to preserve this treasure called Oregon. To accomplish its mission, SOLV has implemented several volunteer programs, such as the annual Great Oregon Spring and Fall Beach Cleanups, SOLV IT, Down By The Riverside, Project Oregon, Oregon Adopt-A-River and Team Up for Watershed Health. Additionally SOLV provides education and training through Volunteer Action Training and K-12 service-learning programs. These programs have enabled SOLV to establish the largest environmental volunteer workforce in the state in order to help Oregon's natural and public areas to be pristine and healthy.*

About Oregon Volunteers: *Oregon Volunteers! Commission for Voluntary Action & Service (OV) was created in 1994 by Governor Barbara Roberts to provide Oregonians with a statewide entity that would focus service and volunteer efforts, enhance the ethic of volunteerism in the state, and provide funds for state-based AmeriCorps programs. OV is one of 52 national and community service commissions operating in the United States, its Districts, and territories.*

About Rural Development Initiative: *RDI is an Oregon-based nonprofit dedicated to serving as a catalyst for rural community vitality. It works with rural leaders and volunteers to expand their knowledge, skills and networks so that they can undertake successful community and economic development projects. RDI works at the local, regional and statewide levels to foster strong rural communities. RDI was formed in 1991 in response to economic crisis in the Pacific Northwest. Since then, it has worked with leaders from nearly 300 rural communities to cultivate economic development, plan and implement community improvement projects, address growth related challenges, and build strong leaders and organizations.*

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