

For Immediate Release

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\$5000 Travel Oregon Grant Awarded for Prefontaine Hometown Project

Coos Bay, OR - On the heels of the most successful Prefontaine Memorial Run to date, the Prefontaine Memorial Committee has another reason to celebrate. On September 18th, they were one of 15 groups across the state awarded grant dollars from the Oregon Tourism Commission, Travel Oregon.

“We couldn’t be more excited,” said Executive Director Bob Huggins. “This gives our community a chance to share the legacy of Pre with the thousands of fans who still look up to him.”

The Prefontaine Hometown Project was first conceived by the Coos Bay-North Bend Tourism & Promotions Committee. The project entails a series of historical bronze plaques that would be placed along the race route, each containing an image of Steve Prefontaine and a different quote or record that he held. Along with the plaques, brochures will be designed and printed giving information about Steve Prefontaine’s history, his accomplishments, and points of interest including the race route, the Prefontaine Gallery at the Coos Art Museum, the Prefontaine Memorial adjacent to the Tourist Information Center in Coos Bay, the Prefontaine Track at Marshfield High School, Prefontaine’s burial site at Sunset Memorial Park and the memorial plaques. According to Katherine Hoppe, Director of Promotions & Conventions, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to both honor the city’s favorite son and also help the economic health of the community by providing an invitation to Pre fans to visit his hometown.

Like all large projects, this is one that involves many community partners. “Every entity that we approached for letters of support all said yes, from the cities of Coos Bay and North Bend, to Senator Verger and to Nike. We’ve received in-kind donations from the City of Coos Bay for the installation of the plaques, the advertising agency Echo Design in Wilsonville, Oregon, and John Helfrich, a Marshfield graduate in California, for the design of the plaques,” said Hoppe. The City of Coos Bay and Marshfield High School’s Track and Cross Country Programs will maintain and clean the plaques, and Coos Art Museum will provide materials for tourists to create rubbings of the plaques to create their own souvenirs.

In total, the Prefontaine Hometown Project will cost just over \$21,000. “We still have a little more progress to make,” said Bob Huggins. “We now have \$16,000, which includes our own dollars, in-kind donations, and a very generous contribution from the Coos Bay-North Bend Tourism & Promotions Committee. We still need to raise another \$5,000 in order to complete the project, but at this point we have enough to get started. We’re really hoping members of the community will help us to achieve the final dollars needed.”

Work for the project is slated to begin in November when the first grant check is awarded, and will be completed in time to attract attendees of the 2008 Olympic Trials, which will be held in Eugene next summer. Those wishing to donate can contact Bob Huggins at 541.269.1103 or stop by Huggins Insurance at 445 Elrod Avenue, Coos Bay.

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