

I'm writing to express my support for and urge passage of HB 3526 establishing the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant Program for preservation-based community revitalization and economic development.

As the immediate past chair of the Ross Ragland Theater, I can attest that such grants hold the keys to hope for rural communities such as Klamath Falls, which has preserved its historic downtown to some extent but struggles to maintain it while diversifying its economy away from the logging and wood products industries.

The Ragland, built in 1940 as the Esquire Movie Theater and reborn in 1989 as a 750-seat performing arts and cultural center of the Klamath Basin, struggles each year to earn and raise \$1 million to operate outstanding arts and educational programs that few cities of this size (25,000 urban, 50,000 metro area) enjoy. The Ross Ragland Theater is a nonprofit organization that receives no dedicated public tax dollars, unlike many such theaters which are owned by their cities and operated by nonprofits. Like the rest of downtown, making capital improvements and repairs is difficult to do when funds must go to keeping the doors open. We are in the process of raising funds for solar energy conversion and may become one of the few historic theaters to have solar panels on its rooftop. New air handlers, roof repairs, seat replacements, and additional railings for safety and accessibility are among urgently needed projects that await funding. We have successfully applied for a number of grants, and having a Main Street Revitalization Grant Program would be an exciting part of the funding mix for our restoration needs.

Investing in historic Main Street infrastructure will pay invaluable economic dividends in the years to come. Thank you!

Lynne S. Butterworth, APR