

Measure 26-221 Five year levy: Oregon Historical Society Library, Museum, educational programs

The following nonpartisan report was submitted by the League of Women Voters of Portland:

FIVE YEAR LEVY: OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY, MUSEUM, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

QUESTION: Shall County renew 5-year history museum, library, educational programs levy; maintain \$.05 per \$1,000 assessed value, oversight, beginning 2021. This measure renews current local option taxes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: This levy would continue the existing levy rate \$.05 per \$1,000 of assessed property value that was passed in 2016. The measure's explanatory statement notes that a home with an assessed value of \$200,000 would pay \$10.00 per year based on the best information from the county assessor. The amount of taxes collected is expected to increase from \$3.41 million in the fiscal year 2021-2022 to \$3.87 million in the fiscal year 2025-2026.

Note: Assessed value (AV) is the value used to calculate property tax. It is shown on the property tax statement. It is NOT the same as the real market value (RMV), which is the market price of the home.

PROBABLE RESULTS OF A YES VOTE: A "Yes" vote would fund approximately one-third of the Oregon Historical Society's (OHS) operations supporting the museum, library, and educational programs.

PROBABLE RESULTS OF A NO VOTE: A "No" vote would result in a reduction by approximately one-third of OHS operating funds, which support the museum, library and educational programs. If the levy fails, the rate of \$.05 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation will no longer be charged to property owners.

BACKGROUND: Founded in 1898, the Oregon Historical Society's mission includes preserving our state's history and making it accessible to everyone. Headquartered in downtown Portland at 1200 SW Park Avenue since 1966, the Society's museum features many permanent and rotating exhibits covering local history both before and after Oregon became a state; its research library contains a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. The Society also operates educational programs for children and adults, provides smaller exhibits that travel around the state, and hosts digital collections and history projects on its website. In 2019, the museum welcomed over 71,000 visitors including 8,000 school children to its downtown headquarters.

SUMMARY: Voters approved a five-year local option levy for OHS in both 2011 and 2016; the 2016 renewal passed by 70 percent voter approval. Renewal of the local option levy for the years 2021 - 2026 will continue support to the OHS's museum, library, and educational programs, and without increasing taxes, will:

Keep the museum open 7 days/42 hours per week and the library open 32 hours per week;

Maintain educational programs;

Provide free admission to all school groups and Multnomah County residents;

Collect and preserve important Oregon documents and artifacts;

Support four East Multnomah County historical societies--Fairview-Rockwood-Wilkes Historical Society, Gresham Historical Society, Troutdale Historical Society, and Crown Point Country Historical Society-- which together will receive \$160,000 of the levy for each of the five years;

Provide exhibits and services that reflect the diverse histories of our region.

An independent citizen oversight committee and annual audits will ensure accountability.

Resources:

Multnomah County - [Ballot Measure 26-221 - Five year levy: Oregon Historical Society Library, Museum, educational programs](#)

Oregon Historical Society: <https://www.ohs.org/>

Oregon Blue Book: <https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/cultural/history-society.aspx>

Oregon Encyclopedia: <https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/cultural/history-society.aspx>

Notice of Measure Election and Explanatory Statement: <https://multco.us/file/96141/download>