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October 16th, 2009
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Central City Concern Unveils Golden West Building African-American History

Exhibit – October 22nd

Portland, OR – On Thursday, October 22nd, Central City Concern will host an “unveiling” celebration for a newly installed permanent exterior exhibit on two sides of the Golden West Building, former center of Portland's African-American social and business life in the first decades of the twentieth century. The celebration will be free and open to the public, from 5:00 – 6:30 pm, at Carleton Hart Architects, 322 NW 8th Avenue. The event will feature timeless music from “Sweet Baby James,” a song from the Portland Center Stage production “Ragtime” performed by actors Gavin Gregory and Rachael Ferrera, and remarks at 5:30 by City of Portland Commissioner Randy Leonard and members of the project advisory committee.

The exhibit tells a social and ethnic story of the vibrant African-American community in Portland in the early 1900s and the successes and challenges of its residents. “In that early generation of the Black community here...you could find the very powerful strains of what you might call pursuit of the American dream,” said Dr. Darrell Millner, Professor in the Black Studies Department at Portland State University and a consultant on the exhibit.

Central City Concern (CCC) owns the Golden West Building at 707 NW Everett (and Broadway) which is one of the earliest architectural landmarks of African-American history in Portland. The exhibit consists of six visual panels on the exterior of the



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building and a visitor activated sound component. Curator Dr. Jacqueline Peterson-Loomis of Washington State University-Vancouver and the Old Town History Project worked with an advisory committee composed of community members and historians to create the display. “So much of the neighborhood’s rich history is unknown to Portland residents,” said Dr. Peterson-Loomis. “This street level installation is a first step – and a long-term goal of the Old Town History Project- in bringing the neighborhood's multiethnic history to life in a series of public street level exhibits and soundscapes.”

Central City Concern’s mission is to provide pathways to self-sufficiency through active intervention in poverty and homelessness. CCC operates more than 1,400 units of affordable housing and provides health, recovery and employment services to more than 13,000 individuals in the Portland metro area every year. The history display was made possible in part by grants from the City of Portland Vision Into Action program, and from Oregon Humanities, a statewide nonprofit organization and an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which funds Oregon Humanities’ grant program.

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