

Former Chemeketa exec to lead Willamette Heritage Center



John R. Hawkins of Salem has been named interim executive director of the Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill, the board announced Monday.

The current executive director, Peter M. Booth, will leave in late December to take a similar position at the Museum of Western Colorado in Grand Junction. He has led the heritage center for 4 ½ years.

"From what I can tell, Peter has done a wonderful job leading this organization," said Hawkins on Monday. "I feel privileged to follow in his footsteps."

He officially starts in January, but he met with Booth on Monday to

get oriented before the holidays.

The board will start recruiting for a permanent executive director in January. That's estimated to take three to six months, Hawkins said.

Hawkins was the executive director of the college foundation and director of college advancement for Chemeketa Community College from October 1993 to August 2008. He was responsible for the administration of the non-profit corporation and public relations department. The foundation raised about \$9 million on his watch.

Since then he has been preserving the life stories of people through his own business, Personal Chronicles, and the Veterans History Project. Working at the Willamette Heritage Center will allow him to help preserve and share the heritage of the Willamette Valley, Hawkins noted.

He serves as a member of the Association of Personal Historians and the steering committee of Leave a Legacy of the Mid-Willamette Valley. He has a bachelor of arts degree in history from Whitman College, Walla Walla, Wash.

"We are fortunate that John has agreed to serve the WHC in the role of interim executive director. John has a wealth of management and non-profit experience and is very well respected in the Salem community," said Ross Stout, board president, in a release.