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**Connecting the Canyon for
Business and Community Growth**

June 12, 2019

Re: Reid House Visitor Center

To the Travel Oregon Grant Advisory Council,

The North Santiam Chamber of Commerce thanks you for your consideration of this project. As you may know, Mill City is the center of our Canyon communities and has been part of a pivotal transformation from a historic logging economy to a tourism based economy. This transformation has been significantly helped by the many community volunteers and we ask you for your support to continue these efforts.

A necessary part of this transformation includes the ability for our community groups and businesses to reach visitors in an effective manner. The Chamber currently hosts an online portal, and we distribute an annual directory with maps and other information. However, we have been advised from several tourism sources that one of the best ways to reach people is through a staffed visitor center. This has been confirmed by requests from visitors and residents as they seek out more information about the area.

Our rural Chamber is primarily operated with volunteer help from several dedicated small business owners and we are primarily funded by small local businesses. Because of these funding limitations, we have had past challenges in maintaining an active visitor information center. Through the City of Mill City, and the bequeathment of the Reid House, our volunteers have the renewed opportunity to create a partnership to provide a more visible and dedicated service to our visitors, which we anticipate will increase our community revenue now and in the future.

Funding from Travel Oregon will help serve as a catalyst to help us create legitimacy for the project as we seek out additional funding and volunteer options for the continued operation of the visitor center at the Reid House. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gates

Chamber Liaison, North Santiam Chamber of Commerce