



DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TOM KRESS CHRIS BOICE TIM FREEMAN

Douglas County Courthouse, Room 217
1036 SE Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Douglas County Museum Opens New Exhibit – Archie Creek Fire

(Douglas County, Ore.) Douglas County Commissioners Tom Kress, Chris Boice, and Tim Freeman and the Douglas County Museum of History & Natural History, along with exhibit sponsors Douglas County Museum Foundation and Douglas Timber Operators (DTO) are pleased to announce that the latest exhibit, “**Archie Creek Fire**,” is now open for visitors. The new limited-time exhibit documents the most disastrous wildfire in Douglas County history that ravaged the community of Glide in September 2020. The “**Archie Creek Fire**” exhibit utilizes a seamless combination of film interviews, live-recorded videos, drone footage, photographs and artifacts that take you on a journey from the explosive front lines to the suppression efforts to unimaginable evacuations to the ashes of the aftermath. It tells the story of real people, their heartbreaking and heroic experiences, and the challenges they faced then and for some, the challenges they still face today. The exhibit, which took several months to curate is expected to be available for viewing through the end of year.

Last night, Thursday, April 27, 2023, the Commissioners, Museum staff, Museum foundation and DTO sponsored an open house to debut the new exhibit. The evening started with a special kick off presentation featuring Matt Hill, the Executive Director of DTO and the Museum Foundation President; Pat Skrip with Douglas Forest Protective Association; Commissioner Freeman; Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin; State Representative Virgile Osborne and Commissioner Kress. The copy of the video presentation will be posted to the [Douglas County Government Facebook page](#).

“It’s hard to find a silver lining in an event like this...it’s a somber occasion for us to be here and look at these profound images. I hope that this exhibit captures what happened with the appropriate remembrance,” commented Matt Hill. *“There is certainly a collective grief in our community for everyone for what was lost up there.”*

“My reflection is, I came out more confident in our system and our leaders at all levels including our volunteers, elected officials and timber companies...I am blessed to be among good company,” remarked Pat Skrip. *“As far as the day of the event. You train for it, but I never thought in my career that I would be having a conversation with the Sheriff’s Department and Emergency Services about evacuating an entire town. I always told myself that if I was going to be in the middle of a natural disaster that I wanted to be in a place with committed people who are well practiced, and Douglas County stood-up to the challenge.”*

The “Archie Creek Fire” exhibit is the culmination of a lot of hard work that includes a huge list of partners and contributors, without whom this exhibit would not have been possible. The creation and coordination of this remarkable exhibit was led by Hill, and James Davis, the Douglas County Museum Director, with assistance from Museum Research Librarian Karen Bratton, Museum Department Assistant Meredith Hutchison and members of the Douglas County Museum Foundation.

“I want to thank Matt for truly capturing this event,” stated Commissioner Freeman. *“I want you all to hear me say, thank you! This community is amazing and what everybody did in helping their neighbors, their friends, their families and their community during and after the fire was just remarkable to watch.”*

“This was a fire unlike any fire I had ever experienced, and I have been on a lot of fires over the year. This wasn’t just a forest fire. This was a firestorm,” noted Sheriff Hanlin. *“This incident reminded me of how fortunate we*

are to live where we live, and have the cooperation and coordination that we do have. It makes me darn proud to be Sheriff of this community!"

Hill started the journey of recounting the Archie Creek Fire by directing a nine-part film series back in 2021 called "[The Ashes of Archie Creek](#)". The film was produced by DTO, a nonprofit that represents over 140 manufacturing, logging, trucking and private landowners and is featured on their [YouTube](#) channel and [Facebook](#) page. Each of the nine episodes features interviews with people impacted by the wildfire that burned more than 131,000 acres of federal and private lands and burned 154 homes. The film series led to a column in The News Review and then to talks with the Douglas County Museum about an exhibit. Contributing to the exhibit and videos were Commissioner Tim Freeman, Douglas County Museum staff, Douglas County Museum Foundation members, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Douglas County Search and Rescue, Douglas Forest Protective Association, Glide Revitalization, Glide Rural Fire Department, local rural fire departments, Roseburg Forest Products, U.S.F.S., BLM, ODOT, Representative Virgile Osborne, OSP, local logging companies, the Finlay Family, and the Kawamura and Moore families.

"I have been part of Search and Rescue for over 20 years. Over the 20 years we have a lot of evacuations, but never to the extreme of what we had that first day," said Rep. Osborne. ***"After the initial response, we had our orders to evacuate the town of Glide. Which was incredible, because we had never faced anything like that before. I remember the heartbreaking part. As we were going door to door in Glide, there were people that were not mobile and needed extra help. People burst into tears when we knocked on their doors....worried about how they were going to get their loved ones out and if they were going to lose their homes."***

The presentations concluded with a wrap-up speech by Commissioner Kress. ***"To this day the Archie Creek fire is the most devastating fire to ever ravage Douglas County. We wanted to document it, we wanted to save it and we wanted to tell our story for all to see. For many people from the Glide community, the Archie Creek Fire was a life changing event. It's still very present in their minds and they are still living it today. Despite the many losses, this exhibit speaks of resiliency, the strength of community and the hope of new beginnings. It shows us what can be achieved when individuals join together to help one another heal and rebuild."***

Being at the heart of a natural resource-based economy, the Douglas County Museum pays homage to the mining, fishing, farming and timber industries in Douglas County. Open to visitors for over 50 years, the Museum boasts Oregon's largest natural history collection with more than 7,500 preserved items that help tell the ancient and contemporary stories of the Umpqua River Valley. It showcases the wonderful ecological diversity of our county, as it traverses an amazingly wide range of elevations, environments, vegetation and creatures from the snowcapped peaks of Mt. Thielsen in the Cascade Mountain Range, through the Umpqua Valley – which is defined by the watershed basin of the Umpqua River, then over the Coastal Mountain Range to the crashing surf of the Pacific Ocean in Winchester Bay. The Museum also features cultural and period relics from a time when Native Americans inhabited the mountains, streams and shores of the County. Home to humans for more than 10,000 years, the valley is named for the Umpqua Tribe that still call this area home. It then chronicles the journey of the first non-native explorers, pioneers and settlers that came to our area as fur trappers, missionaries, prospectors, loggers, farmers and fishermen.

The **Douglas County Museum of History & Natural History** is located at 123 Museum Drive in Roseburg, Oregon (adjacent to I-5 off Exit 123 and the Douglas County Fairgrounds). It is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. It can take 1-3 hours to tour the museum depending on your pace. The Lavola Bakken Research Library is open Tuesday through Saturday 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm. Admission is free for members, ages 0-4 are free, students 5-17 are \$2.00, adults are \$8.00, seniors and veterans are \$5.00. The "Museum Mercantile," our Museum gift shop, offers the area's leading source of books on Douglas County's natural and cultural history, as well as a wide range of Oregon souvenirs and other great gift items including educational and historic toys. For more information or to volunteer at our Douglas County Museum of History & Natural History check out our website at <https://umpquavalleymuseums.org/> or call the Douglas County Museum at (541) 957-7007.

"As a reminder, please take the time to walk around our museum. It's a wonderful local gem we have right here in Douglas County, and most people don't spend the time to explore it. So, take the opportunity to do that." - Commissioner Kress.

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ARCHIE CREEK FIRE

MUSEUM EXHIBIT



MATT HILL
Douglas Timber Operators
Douglas County Museum Foundation



PAT SKRIP
Douglas Forest Protective Assoc.



REP. VIRGLE OSBORNE
Douglas County Search & Rescue



TOM KRESS
Douglas County Commissioner



TIM FREEMAN
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SHERIFF JOHN HANLIN
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JAMES DAVIS
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