

EXTERIOR FEATURES
AND ART COLLECTION

- 1

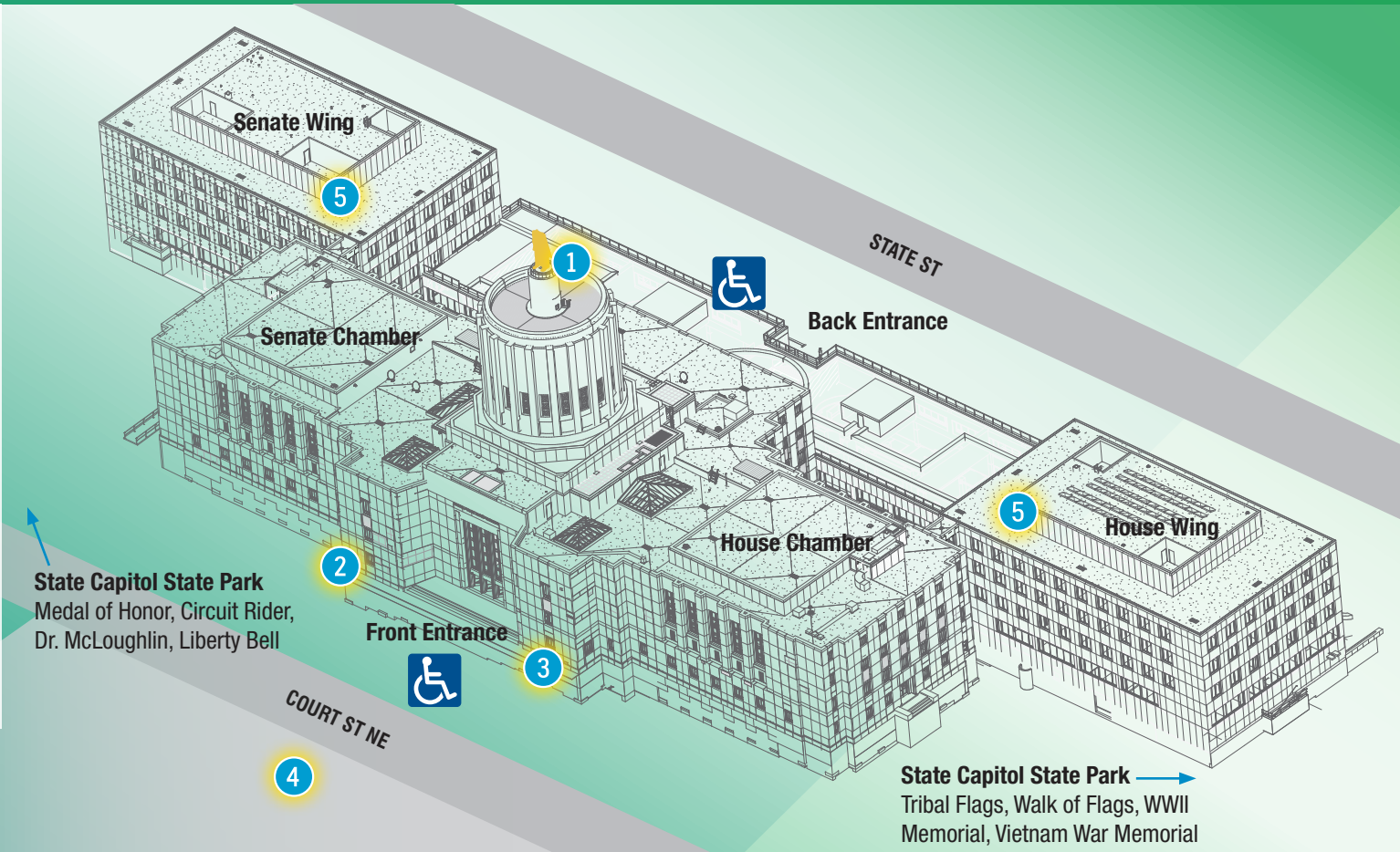
The Capitol's most eye-catching feature, the **OREGON PIONEER**, stands atop the Rotunda. The 23-foot bronze statue is gilded with gold leaf and designed to symbolize early Euro-American settlers. The statue faces north, looks west, and can be seen from miles away.
- 2

The relief sculpture on the pedestal at left depicts **LEWIS AND CLARK LED BY SAGAGAWEA**. The overland exploring party led by Lewis and Clark reached the Columbia River in 1805 in search of a water route to the Pacific Ocean. The sculpture reflects the style popular in the 1930s and is coupled with a map of the Expedition's route on the reverse side.
- 3

The relief sculpture on the pedestal at right depicts **THE COVERED WAGON**, designed to celebrate families who crossed the continent by the Oregon Trail. The trail was used by as many as 400,000 new settlers to the area. The route is mapped on the reverse.
- 4

The Capitol Commission directed the design for the **MALL** across Court Street NE in a style similar to the Mall in Washington, D.C. The 1936-38 construction of the Capitol took over four blocks of land for the mall, demolishing some of Salem's early residences.
- 5

In 1975, Oregon passed the **PERCENT FOR ART** legislation, which required no less than 1% of construction costs of public buildings in Marion and Polk counties to be set aside for art. The program was soon expanded statewide and places permanent art of the highest quality in public buildings. As a part of that program, artworks in the Capitol collection can be seen throughout the building.



The Exterior

In a style sometimes described as “Stripped Classical,” the State Capitol is symmetrically organized. It features simple adornment with functional entrances and stark surfaces rather than monumental staircases, grand columns, and intricate ornamentation of many other state capitols. The clean marble façade is accented with sculptures and carved details honoring Oregon’s history.

Symbols of Oregon

The Capitol was dedicated in 1938. Many of the symbols, sculptures, and paintings created for the original building celebrate a narrow version of Oregon history focused on Euro-American settlement. These images reflect the social, political, and historical context of the era in which they were developed.

While many symbols endure, others may no longer be truly reflective of Oregon and Oregonians today.



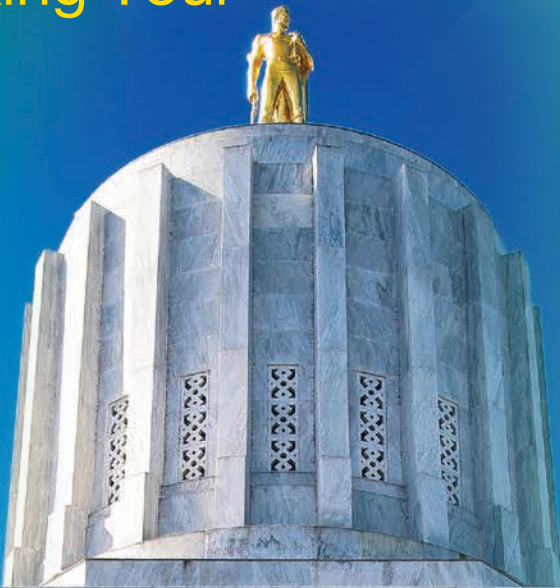
Walk of Flags



Explore the Capitol



Oregon State Capitol
Walking Tour



Welcome to Your
Oregon State Capitol

The Oregon Legislature acted quickly to begin rebuilding after the loss of the Capitol to fire in 1935. With funds scarce during the Great Depression, the Legislature relied in part on federal funding to help finance the new \$2.5 million Capitol. The state appropriated 55% of the funds with 45% coming from the Federal Public Works Administration.

A Legislative-appointed Capitol Commission held a national competition to select a design that would represent Oregon’s uniqueness. The winning design, selected from 126 entries, blended traditional and modern styles in a domed rotunda with identical wings. On October 1, 1938, Oregon dedicated the new State Capitol.



The Commission selected Francis Keally's Art Deco design. It is one of only five Art Deco state capitols in the nation—the others being in Alaska, Louisiana, Nebraska, and North Dakota.



The second capitol is shown here. The previous capitols on this site faced west toward the Willamette River, which was a major transportation route at the time. The Capitol Commission re-oriented the Capitol to the north, taking advantage of city blocks available for development.



The Covered Wagon

Explore the Building

Use this map to tour the building and examine its features. Discover architectural details such as bronze sculptures, carved embellishments, and painted vignettes of Oregon symbols.

503-986-1388
www.oregoncapitol.com
900 Court St. NE | Salem, Oregon



Explore State Capitol
State Park here



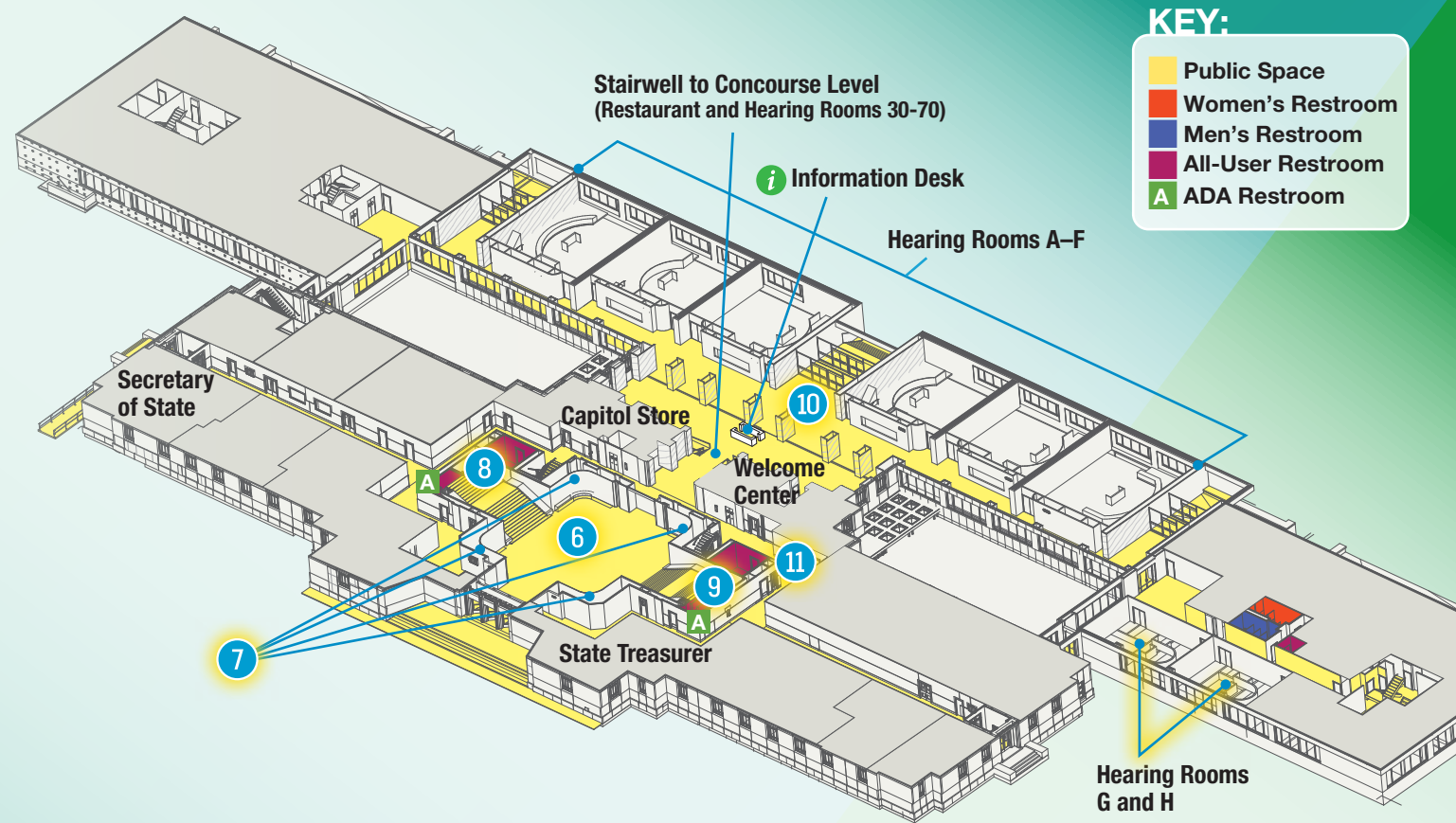
Funding for this brochure
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Capitol Foundation

FIRST FLOOR FEATURES

- 6** The **ROTUNDA** is taller than a nine story building. Look up to see the 33 gold leaf stars representing Oregon as the 33rd state admitted to the Union. On the Rotunda floor, the State Seal features imagery symbolic to early Oregon statesmen.
- 7** The **ROTUNDA MURALS** were painted as a part of the 1930s Federal Art Project. Each depicts an event in the Euro-American settlement of Oregon: Captain Robert Gray arriving at the Columbia River in 1792, Lewis and Clark arriving at Celilo Falls in 1805, the first white women to arrive welcomed by Dr. John McLoughlin in 1836, and the first wagon train arriving in 1843. The imagined and stylized scenes continue the theme of western expansion that the building's designers featured.
- 8** During the first half of the 19th century, Oregon was claimed by many countries. American, French-Canadian, and British settlers in the Willamette Valley began holding assemblies to debate property rights in the absence of a legal system. A vote during one of these meetings in 1843 created a provisional government, the **SEAL** of which can be seen here.
- 9** Oregon became an official territory of the U.S. in 1848 and this **SEAL** was adopted a year later. The beaver was a nod to the past influence of the fur trade and the sailing ship a reference to commerce. The Latin motto means, "She flies with her own wings." Oregon would not become a state until 1859.
- 10** In 1977, the Capitol was expanded to include the **GALLERIA**, hearing rooms, and new legislative offices (designated as the Senate and House Wings). The expansion remains true to the building's style and features matching Vermont marble. Here, tour the **EXHIBITS** to learn about the legislative process, key legislative acts, and Oregon history.
- 11** The **ROCK AND MINERAL COLLECTION** displays Oregon sunstones, our state gem, and thunder eggs, our state rock, as well as a number of rocks and minerals collected from throughout the state.



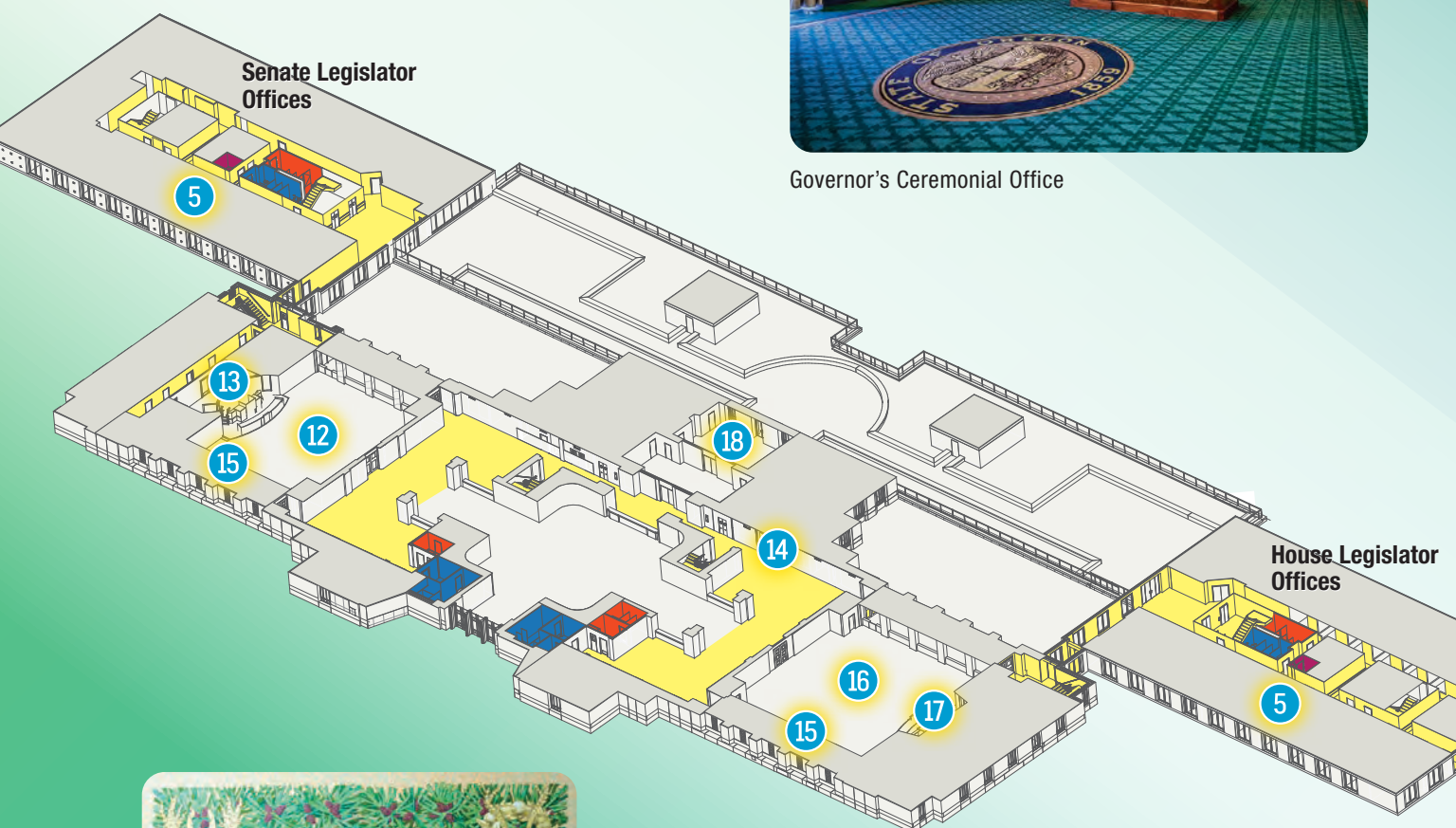
Governor's Ceremonial Office



KEY:

- Public Space
- Women's Restroom
- Men's Restroom
- All-User Restroom
- ADA Restroom

SECOND FLOOR FEATURES



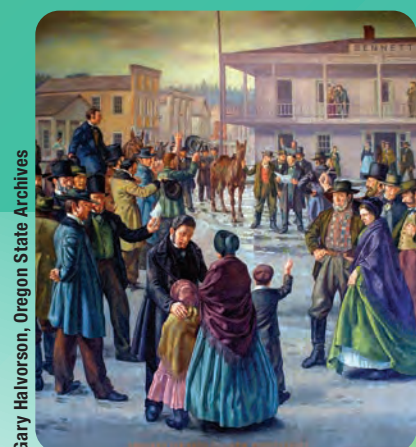
Gary Halvorson, Oregon State Archives

Murals depicting Oregon's main industries in the 1930s line the stairways leading up from the Rotunda.

- 12** The **SENATE CHAMBER** has desks for the 30 members. Senators serve a four-year term. Look for the brass plaques that name and date all who have sat at each desk. Notice the wheat sheaves and Chinook salmon on the carpet symbolizing Oregon agriculture and fishing—the 2nd and 3rd leading industries at the time of Capitol construction.
- 13** The **SENATE MURAL** depicts a rider arriving in Salem bringing the news from Oregon City of Oregon's admission to the union. The mural dates to the 1930s and dramatizes the long-wait for word that Oregon had become a state in 1859.
- 14** **PORTRAITS** of some former governors. Oregon's 30th governor, Republican Tom McCall, is pictured at the coast: a nod to Oregon's status as the first state in the country with all public beaches. Oregon's 34th governor, Democrat Barbara Roberts, is Oregon's first elected female governor.
- 15** The **FRIEZES** above the Senate and House Galleries name 158 people significant to the history of Oregon. If conceived of today, the list might include a number of other important Oregonians.
- 16** The **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER** has desks for the 60 members. Representatives serve a two-year term. As in the Senate, brass plaques name and date legislators who sat at each desk. Notice the carpet, which depicts the Douglas fir, Oregon's State Tree, and symbolizes the timber industry—the leading industry at the time of Capitol construction.
- 17** The **HOUSE MURAL** depicts the 1843 Champoege Meeting, one of several meetings in the Willamette Valley that led to the establishment of the first provisional government. The painting imagines the scene when frontiersmen gathered to debate whether to join the U.S.
- 18** The **GOVERNOR'S CEREMONIAL OFFICE** may be used for public signing of legislation and press conferences. You'll find a hand painted Oregon map and portraits of all of Oregon's governors. To run for governor, you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 30 years old, and have lived in Oregon three years. At 33 years old, Jay Bowerman became Oregon's youngest Governor, when he took over for an ill Frank Benson in 1910, while Governor Charles Martin became the oldest elected at 71 years of age in 1935.

THIRD FLOOR FEATURES

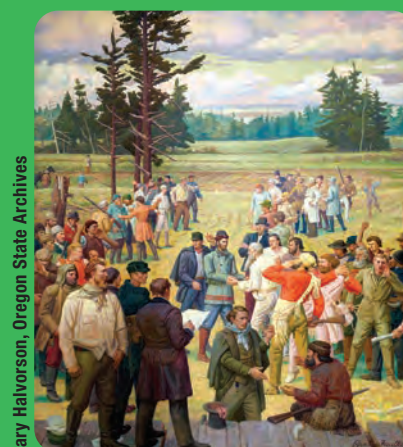
- 19** When the Legislature is in session, visit the **THIRD FLOOR VIEWING GALLERIES** to watch democracy in action as the House and Senate debate the issues that affect our lives today.



Senate mural



Senate



House mural



House

The State Capitol is the fourth newest in the nation.

The Oregon State Seal

The territorial government adopted the original State Seal in 1857 in anticipation of Oregon becoming a state. Since then, many versions of the seal have been issued. Governor Tom McCall declared this version the official State Seal to end confusion over the various depictions.

Each component has symbolic meaning in the story of Oregon. 1859 represents the year Oregon was admitted to the union.



State Seal

Thirty-three stars represent Oregon as the 33rd state. An eagle with olive branch and arrows symbolizes peace through strength. Two ships—one American arriving and one British ship leaving—symbolize Oregon becoming part of the United States. Timber, grain, pickax, and plow symbolize Oregon's economic activities and the covered wagon symbolizes pioneers on the Oregon Trail, while the mountains and elk symbolize our unique natural environment.

