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New Day Dawns for the 1874 Old U.S. Mint

\$1 Million Grant from State of California Provides Critical Funding to Explore the Creation of a Vibrant History Center in the Treasured Landmark

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (November 22, 2016) – Efforts to restore the 1874 Old U.S. Mint and transform the historic treasure into a center of history, culture, and learning received a major boost today. The State of California awarded a \$1 million grant to the California Historical Society, in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, to explore, plan and conduct the required studies to help advance the next phase of development and implementation of the Old Mint Restoration Project.

The announcement was made at the 1874 Old U.S. Mint where community leaders and supporters of the project toured the iconic building and celebrated the beginning of a new chapter in the restoration plans, pledging their support for ensuring success in the future.

The \$1 million grant, approved by the California Legislature and Governor as part of the 2017 budget, was supported through the work of many partners and supporters, including State Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-San Francisco) and San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee.

“Today marks an important milestone for helping restore the Old Mint,” said Senator Leno. “This \$1 million grant provides important resources to ensure a successful venture that will benefit our entire state. The Old Mint is a true landmark that reflects California’s glorious past while envisioning its brilliant future.”

“Transforming the Mint is a wonderful opportunity to ensure that the lessons of history help us fight for a just future for everyone,” said Assemblymember Phil Ting. “Our values of inclusion and innovation in San Francisco ultimately prevail in California and our nation. I am excited to see how this facility will remind us of that.”

In March 2016, after a competitive RFP process administered through the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the City and County of San Francisco announced the selection of the California Historical Society, the State’s official historic society, as its lead cultural partner on the restoration project.

“The Old U.S. Mint represents an important piece of San Francisco’s rich history,” said Mayor Ed Lee. “This grant provides critical funding that will bring us closer to restoring this iconic landmark into a center for culture and learning for all San Franciscans and visitors to our great city.”

The grant will be administered by the California State Library through the California Historical Society in partnership with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The funding allows the California Historical Society to continue collaborating with the City of San Francisco, the State Library, and other partners to fully explore and design the organizations’ new home in the Old U.S. Mint and building an important cultural, learning and historical center within its granite walls and foundation.

“The California Historical Society is deeply honored to continue our work with the City of San Francisco, the State of California and so many cultural partners, towards the rehabilitation of this remarkable community asset,” said Dr. Anthea Hartig, Executive Director and CEO. “We are thrilled to receive this generous grant and embrace the prospect of helping to transform this historic building into a center of culture and learning for the people of San Francisco, for everyone in the Golden State, the nation, and the world.”

The California Historical Society was selected as the lead partner with the City for the restoration of the Old Mint through a Request for Proposal process. CHS has already performed initial feasibility studies and the new funding marks an important milestone in helping advance the next phase of development strategy that will include conducting a capital campaign feasibility study, developing a full business and financial plan, market study and revenue analysis, and designing of a Community Cultural Commons among other priorities. Through an agreement with the City and CHS, the work will be conducted over the next two years with the result being a full reuse and rehabilitation proposal of the Old Mint that will be submitted to City policy-makers for review and approval, as needed.

California Office of Historic Preservation Officer Julianne Polanco praised the announcement, saying, “We are pleased to see a collaborative process between the California Historical Society and the City of San Francisco focused on the very important Old Mint Building, a National Historic Landmark. When historic buildings are rehabilitated, not only are jobs created, skills are gained as new life rises from within. In doing so, a physical, tangible place to engage our shared history, inspire and create new memories, and set the framework for a thriving future is realized.”

The SF Mint was constructed in 1874 to serve a burgeoning state and local economy, and is one of the few buildings to survive the 1906 earthquake. The United States Old Mint opened in 1874 and served as one of the official repositories for the country's gold reserves for decades. The 100,000-square-foot building was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961, and the federal government transferred the Old Mint to the city in 2003.

About the California Historical Society: Founded in 1871, the California Historical Society (CHS) is a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire and empower people to make California's richly diverse past a meaningful part of their contemporary lives – and to promote a more just and informed future. CHS enacts its mission with a wide range of library, exhibition, publication, education, and public outreach programs that explore the complex and continuing history of the State. CHS is headquartered in San Francisco, and in 2015, the organization led a citywide effort to celebrate the Centennial of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. For more information, please visit www.californiahistoricalsociety.org

About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development: The Office of Economic and Workforce Development's (OEWD), under direction of Mayor Lee, provides city-wide leadership for workforce development, business attraction and retention, neighborhood commercial revitalization, international business and development planning. OEWD's programs are responsible for strengthening San Francisco's many diverse neighborhoods and commercial corridors. For more information, go to: www.oewd.org

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