OUR LIBRARY MISSION

It is the mission of the Oregon Public Library to provide appropriate resources in support of the information and recreational needs of area residents, and thereby be a center for community enrichment and lifelong learning.

History
The Oregon Public Library was established in 1872 and resided in a rental space. In the early 1900’s, Andrew Carnegie announced that he would donate $10,000 for a public library building on the condition of providing a maintenance funding of 10% was met.

Plans for the current library building were drawn by Chicago architects Pond and Pond. The construction contract was given in 1907 to M.D. Smith of Dixon. Doors opened for public service in 1908.

A second floor gallery was provided at the suggestion of members of the Eagle’s Nest Art Colony. The artists used the gallery space for public art exhibitions and lectures. Eagle’s Nest Colony founder Lorado Taft persuaded fellow artists to donate over fifty works of art to the Oregon Public Library as a permanent collection in 1918. These paintings and sculptures remain in the library to this day.
The Eagle's Nest Art Colony was founded by Lorado Taft in 1898. This group brought together different artists from many walks of life. In 1918 the library gallery was dedicated and Taft had various artists donate paintings or sculptures. Many pieces are still on display today in the library.

New and detailed research about the long art history of Oregon, Illinois has now been published. In an engaging book by Beth Simeone, titled The Art of Oregon: Influence of the Eagle’s Nest Art Colony and the Rediscovered Collection They Left Behind, the extraordinary history unfolds. This book is available for purchase at the library.

Thanks to the efforts of Oregon residents Marsha Behrens, Bonnie Kelly-Mueller, Helen Sierra, the Oregon Public Library was placed on the National Register of History Places on May 9, 2003.