



Office of the Mayor

David H. Bieter
Mayor

City Council

President
David Eberle

Council Pro Tem
Maryanne Jordan

Vernon L. Bisterfeldt
Elaine Clegg
Alan W. Shealy
Jim Tibbs

Boise City Hall
Third Floor
150 N. Capitol Boulevard

Mailing Address
P. O. Box 500
Boise, Idaho 83701-0500

Phone
208/384-4422

Fax
208/384-4420

TDD/TTY
800/377-3529

Web
www.cityofboise.org/mayor

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Contact: Michael Zuzel
384-4401 / mzuzel@cityofboise.org

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CREATION OF NEW DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND HISTORY

The Boise City Council on Tuesday evening approved ordinances elevating the Boise City Arts Commission to full department status and adding the Office of the City Historian to the new department's duties.

Mayor David Bieter and the arts commission proposed the change as essential to help foster an environment where learning, the arts and recreation thrive, a key citizen value in the city's strategic plan. The arts commission and the city historian, formerly divisions of the Office of the Mayor, now constitute the city's 12th department.

"A livable city is one where arts, culture, heritage and history are all considered an important part of the fabric of the community," Mayor Bieter said. "By elevating Boise's arts commission to department-level status and incorporating the important work of the city historian, we're raising the level of discussion and incorporating these values across the broad range of city services, literally from A to Z – from Airport to Zoo."

The Department of Arts and History's mission is to enhance the Boise community by providing leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for the arts and history. The department will continue to provide access to arts and history opportunities through its new Web site, experienceboise.org; advocate and facilitate public/private partnerships for arts and history programs; preserve and promote the unique history of Boise, organize free outdoor performances for citizens; provide cultural services to other city departments; and promote sustainability through the arts.

Policy direction for the new department will continue to be set by the arts commission, which will include appointees with history knowledge and qualifications. In addition, a new History Committee has been created as part of the new department to address heritage-focused projects and programs.

Mayor Bieter created the Office of the City Historian in 2004 in partnership with Boise State University. The city historian has produced the popular Fettuccine Forum, a free public-affairs lecture series held in conjunction with downtown Boise's First Thursday; a Boise city history Web site (www.boisestate.edu/history/cityhistorian); and the acclaimed book *Ethnic Landmarks*, first in the *Boise City Walking Series* of history guides.