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Kristin O’Lear Becomes the New Executive Director for Kodiak History Museum

Kodiak, Alaska – Kodiak History Museum (KHM) is proud to announce that Kristin O’Lear has accepted the position of Executive Director. Ms. O’Lear was chosen from a field of qualified applicants to join KHM in its mission to facilitate the exploration of the natural, cultural, and artistic heritage of Kodiak Island and surrounding communities. She will lead the KHM team in creating opportunities for the public to discover, share, and exchange knowledge through the museum’s collections and resources.

Ms. O’Lear brings more than a decade of museum experience and will be joining KHM from Imperial Valley Desert Museum in Ocotillo, CA where she has served as Executive Director since 2021, and head curator before that. During her tenure there Ms. O’Lear successfully led the organization through a period of rapid community engagement expansion and preparation for formal museum accreditation.

“I am thrilled to join the KHM team,” said Ms. O’Lear. “I am dedicated to sharing diverse narratives and committed to community engagement. I look forward to contributing positively to the Kodiak History Museum, local community partners and agencies, and the broader Kodiak community.”

KHM Board Chair Toby Sullivan said, “We are excited to welcome Kristin as our new Executive Director. Kristin knows firsthand the vital role museums play, not only in celebrating local history but also in providing an accessible community space for conversation on current events and evolving perspectives. The board was impressed by Kristin’s passion and energy and feels she will be a great addition to the museum, and the Kodiak community.”

Ms. O’Lear received a Master of Arts in History, with a concentration in Public History, and a Bachelor’s in International Relations from Michigan State University. Her experience in leading teams will be pivotal in taking KHM forward in its commitment to expanding historical perspective and access to its collections and maintaining the museum’s relevance in the community. Her passion for local history will fit well with KHM’s decades-long celebration of Kodiak’s culture and history. Ms. O’Lear will begin working remotely in April and fully assume her responsibilities as Executive Director in person in early May.

About Kodiak History Museum: KHM cares for objects and archives collections, as well as the Russian-American Magazin building (c. 1808), which is maintained in partnership with the City of Kodiak. In 2019, the Kodiak Historical Society rebranded as the Kodiak History Museum and completed a Permanent Exhibits Redesign and Facility Upgrade Project. The redesigned space features community-driven, approachable permanent exhibits showcasing Kodiak’s history.

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