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\$1.5 MILLION GRANT FROM MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST BUILDS MOMENTUM FOR PORTLAND CENTER STAGE'S ARMORY THEATER PROJECT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

March 28, 2005, Portland, ORE. – **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE** (**Chris Coleman**, Artistic Director; **Edith Love**, Managing Director) announces a \$1.5 million grant from the **Meyer Memorial Trust** for the theater's Center Stage in the Pearl Capital Campaign. This major gift, combined with the \$13.7 million already secured, puts **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE** at 46% (\$15.2 million) of the \$32.9 million overall goal required to establish its new performing home in the historic (1891) Armory in Portland's Pearl District. The Meyer grant includes a matching challenge that will match a dollar for every three raised from individual and business donors. With construction well underway, the theater expects to move into the Armory, with its two highly flexible, state-of-the art theaters, in Fall 2006.

The Armory Theater Project is retrofitting, rehabilitating and redesigning Portland's second largest 19th century building (NW Davis, between 10th and 11th) with two theaters (600 and 200 seats, respectively), generous public spaces, administrative offices, an expanded box office, full costume shop, rehearsal hall, and other backstage facilities. It is doing so with a best-practices sustainable architecture design that seeks to achieve the highest possible LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. The Armory Theater Project team of GBD Architects, Hoffman Construction and Gerding/Edlen Development is the same team responsible for the award-winning Brewery Blocks development, also in the Pearl District. If successful, The Armory Theater Project will be the first performing arts facility *and* the first historic rehabilitation in the world to attain a Platinum LEED rating.

Julie Vigeland, Co-chair with Henry Wessinger of the Center Stage in the Pearl Campaign Committee, observes, "Not only is this generous gift significant in itself but it's also an important statement of confidence by one of the most respected funding organizations in Portland and the United States. The Meyer Memorial Trust is well known for its rigorous scrutiny of the organizations it elects to fund. This \$1.5 million gift affirms the vision and strategic plan that the board and staff of PCS have worked so hard to articulate. The Trust's leadership is sure to attract other investors in the Campaign."

This grant continues Meyer Memorial Trust's investment in **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE**'s ongoing evolution as one of the nation's most vibrant regional theaters. In November 2001, the Trust awarded its first gift to the theater – a \$1.35 million, three year grant – which, at that time, was the largest gift to the theater since its founding in 1988. With its strict budget balancing and matching grant requirements, the 2001 grant attracted an additional \$5,650,000 to the theater and

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accomplished its goal: stabilizing PCS' financial, marketing and fundraising infrastructure. That gift also set the stage for the next phase of PCS' development: the establishment of its own performing space, better suited to the artistic vision and financial realities of a contemporary theater of its size.

Doug Stamm, executive director of Meyer Memorial Trust comments, "The Meyer Trust is extremely pleased to support PORTLAND CENTER STAGE's project to renovate the historic Portland Armory building. PORTLAND CENTER STAGE's effort serves several important community goals: it restores an icon of Portland history, advances Portland as a center for green and sustainable building practices, and provides a performing arts space currently lacking in Portland that is essential to the presentation of high quality, innovative and well attended theater performances. In addition to providing a much-needed space for PORTLAND CENTER STAGE, the new performance center will be utilized by many community groups, including emerging young artists and companies. Through this challenge grant, the Trust hopes to stimulate other Oregonian's to step forward and support this campaign."

Greg Ness, chair of PORTLAND CENTER STAGE's board of directors, adds, "We are extremely grateful to the Trust for its continuing confidence in and support of PCS' growth. Since PCS is one of the city's leading arts organizations and The Armory is being designed to conform with the city's long-held values of sustainable, progressive urban development, this grant also speaks to Portland's identity as a city that values innovation, creativity, and forward thinking while honoring the past and preserving a sense of community."

PCS Managing Director **Edith Love** notes that with this grant the Meyer Memorial Trust has once again taken a pivotal leadership role in the community. By investing in the theater at a critical juncture in its development, the Trust seeks to encourage individuals and business donors to do the same. Love states, "The Trust has made another tremendous statement of support for PCS and the community's desire for professional theater of the highest possible caliber in Portland."

PCS Artistic Director **Chris Coleman**, concludes, "Theater is a public expression of community, of communal storytelling. I happened to come to Portland at a time of unprecedented growth and artistic development for the city. I am thrilled that with The Armory Theater Project, PCS can play a role in advancing that growth. I am also pleased that the Trust is our partner in a project that deeply resonates with creative and civic values."

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE is non-profit organization. Contributions to the Center Stage in the Pearl Campaign are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE, an affiliate of the League of Resident Theaters, Actors' Equity Association and Theatre Communications Group and a resident theater of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, is Portland's largest professional theater. It was established in 1988 as a Portland presence for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and established an independent identity six years later. With seven productions scheduled for 2005-2006, including two world premieres, PORTLAND CENTER STAGE is consolidating its reputation for nurturing new work for the American theater (through its annual playwrights festival, Just Add Water/West, convening for the seventh year in July; workshops, readings, and four world premieres since November 2001). These initiatives have been launched or accelerated since Chris Coleman became the theater's fourth artistic director in May 2000.