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Orem, Utah

JOINT RELEASE: NEW LOCATION FOR TIMPANOGOS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

With an eye toward future needs, the City of Orem and the Timpanogos Storytelling Institute are finalizing a plan to relocate the annual Timpanogos Storytelling Festival to Thanksgiving Point as early as 2017.

Orem has been home to the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival for the past 27 years. The idea for this new type of Utah festival developed as Karen Ashton, dedicated library board member, and other Friends of the Orem Public Library continued to pursue fundraising options to spur the construction of a new Children's Wing at the Library. Even after donations and City bond funding were secured to complete the Children's Wing, the Festival continued to be both a fundraiser and an annual event that provided family-friendly entertainment while celebrating the art of traditional storytelling.

Growing crowds and Festival success have brought logistical challenges over the years. In the first 15 years of existence, the Festival outgrew its first home in the backyard of the Ashton Residence and its second home on the Olmsted property owned by Rocky Mountain Power. Since 2005, the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival has been presented at Orem's Mt. Timpanogos Park, welcoming thousands of visitors and school children to this beautiful park in Provo Canyon.

"The city has been a constant support to the Festival. Without the city's support, it would have been difficult to sustain the kind of growth that we have had over the years. Like a child who is leaving the beloved and cherished home of their childhood, we leave with the sweetest memories and look forward to the ongoing growth of storytelling in a wider community." – Karen Ashton, Founder

With the Timpanogos Storytelling Institute's increased involvement in year-round storytelling activities, moving the Festival north to Thanksgiving Point will accommodate increased attendance from northern counties and schools as well as provide additional parking and other amenities. Festival organizers have also decided to move the event to one week later in the year to better accommodate school and teacher schedules and allow attendees and volunteers with other Labor Day traditions to participate. While the proposed changes will be an adjustment for many, moving the date and location together seems to make the best sense.

"While the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival has been an incredible part of Orem's history, the City of Orem is looking forward to new opportunities. We know that storytelling has been an important part of the lives of many Orem families, and it will be a tradition that lives on in our community. Orem residents can continue to enjoy storytelling programs at the Orem Public Library and other local venues throughout the year." – Steven Downs, Assistant to the City Manager

Some of the new opportunities for Orem are the development of a long-awaited dog park at Mt. Timpanogos Park and the development of an auditorium adjacent to the Orem Public Library. The scaled-down auditorium project has also evolved over the years, but the much-needed space would serve the nearly 60,000 residents, both young and old, who attend approximately 1,000 Library programs each year. Fundraising for the auditorium construction continues. Master planning for Orem's City Center block is underway, and the Orem City Council continues to study all available options for maximizing community space.