southern exposure
WHAT'S NOW, NEW AND NEXT AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

ANPF commissions play from SOU author

A bilingual play written by Octavio Solis, a part-time faculty member in the SOU Theatre program, and commissioned by the Ashland New Plays Festival is among 12 arts and culture projects included in a new round of Creative Heights grants from Oregon Community Foundation.

Solis' new play is drawn from his story-gathering with survivors and first responders of southern Oregon's 2020 Almeda and South Obenchain fires.

"The 2020 Almeda fire devastated Southern Oregon communities," said Jackie Apodaca, artistic director of Ashland New Plays Festival and chair of the SOU Theatre Department. "Playwright Octavio Solis, an Almeda fire evacuee himself, is weaving the collected narratives together and creating something that we hope will help our community and others heal.

"There are, right now, numerous fires burning in southern Oregon," Apodaca said. "These stories are relevant and necessary. This is Ashland New Plays Festival's very first new work commission and I am so very grateful to have the opportunity and support needed to bring this play to life."

The Oregon Community Foundation will fund a total of $1 million in projects that "celebrate bold creativity, elevate cultural voices and explore community issues across Oregon." The grants, which are intended to increase artists' creative capacity and expand Oregon's cultural visibility, range from $10,000 to $100,000 each. OCF's Creative Heights initiative has funded about $1 million per year since 2014, supporting 165 projects.

"Creative Heights asks artists to dream big and express what they believe matters right now to them personally and for their communities," said Jerry Tischleder, senior program officer for arts and culture at Oregon Community Foundation. "This year's projects reflect themes that resonate across Oregon and challenge us to bridge our differences."