



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Octagon Barn Center Bolstered by Important Gift from Forbes Family

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is pleased to announce a substantial donation by the Forbes Family Fund which significantly boosts efforts to complete the Octagon Barn Center project.

The Forbes' generous gift will support The Land Conservancy's endeavor to successfully usher the Octagon Barn Center through the County's Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process and ultimately bring the site closer to opening for community use. The Octagon Barn Center will be a community gathering place to promote local agriculture, history, recreation and sustainability.

Although the Barn structure has been physically restored, a variety of studies and site improvements are required by the County of San Luis Obispo before allowing public use of the overall site. Just like all other private landowners, The Land Conservancy must formally review and plan for fire safety, ADA accessibility, water and electric usage, traffic patterns, event parking, drainage, erosion and a variety of other occupancy contingencies. Study reports on possible impacts to biological, cultural and historic resources must also be provided. These essential components of the process are both time-consuming and costly which underscores the importance of private support from the Forbes Family.

During a recent design charrette, The Land Conservancy solicited input from several dozen local professionals who provided pro-bono site planning and design work critical to addressing the remaining site improvement issues. The next step is filing the formal Conditional Use Permit application with SLO County Planning and Building. The Land Conservancy has been working closely with County staff to make the permit process as efficient as possible.

Land Conservancy leaders expect the permit process to take most of 2010. ***"We are hopeful that we might be able to grade the site in spring 2011 and complete construction of other site amenities shortly thereafter. The Forbes Gift is an incredible endorsement of our vision and truly THE enabling gift for the CUP process,"*** said BK Richard, project manager and Land Conservancy board trustee.

"The Forbes generous gift gets The Land Conservancy through one of several important processes, yet more funding and in-kind support is necessary to open the Octagon Barn Center," noted Wende David, Membership & Development Manager. Land Conservancy leaders continue to seek out donors and partners to subsidize other critical site infrastructure.

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The Land Conservancy began its effort to repair the Octagon Barn in 1998. The restoration of the Octagon Barn has been a community effort that has involved hundreds of local volunteers and businesses. **The Octagon Barn Center, when completed, will include:**

- Fully restored historic Octagon Barn intended as a community gathering place
- Renovated Milking Parlor for use as a classroom/meeting space and educational displays
- Open air plaza/commons to serve as a park
- County trailhead & staging area for the Bob Jones City to Sea Trail
- Ample parking, restrooms and bike racks to accommodate groups of varying size

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is the preeminent nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local lands with scenic, cultural and historic values. Their efforts help protect drinking water sources, prevent poorly planned development, restore wildlife habitat and promote family farmlands and ranches in this region. Since its formation in 1984, The Land Conservancy has worked with community partners to permanently protect over 10,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County. For more information visit www.LCSLO.org or call (805) 544-9096.

San Luis Obispo's Octagon Barn has been an important feature of the San Luis Obispo landscape for over 100 years. A true rarity, this local Barn is one of only three similar octagonal structures left standing in California. Built at the turn of the century, The Octagon Barn is a symbol of the quintessential landscape of San Luis Obispo County, paying homage to our agricultural and multicultural beginnings. The Land Conservancy has led community efforts to restore this county icon. Since that time, thousands of volunteers have contributed countless hours, and hundreds of generous donors have supported the project. Today, the Barn is poised for new activity at the center of the county's life. Plans are underway to open the Barn and its surrounding area to be known as San Luis Obispo's *Octagon Barn Center*. For more information about the Barn and how to get involved, visit www.OctagonBarn.org.

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