Why is the Oklahoma Cultural Heritage Trust needed?
Oklahoma does not have the infrastructure in place to help cultural institutions protect and preserve valuable collections held by Oklahoma archives, libraries, and museums. Studies have found that almost 100% of organizations have lost irreplaceable materials through natural and manmade disasters, environmental problems, theft and other causes. These losses stem from a need for improved preservation/conservation practices, better trained staff and volunteers, upgraded facilities, and greater financial resources. The Trust will work to build strong public/private partnerships to protect and enhance Oklahoma’s cultural resources.

What programs might it offer? Possibilities include:
• Funding to support local and regional cultural projects and collaborations, as well as information about the availability of other funding opportunities;
• Marketing campaigns to increase public awareness of the needs of Oklahoma’s cultural institutions;
• Comprehensive and consistent training in collection care practices;
• Centralized conservation and digitization laboratories; and
• Technical assistance to develop collection care plans and policies.

How would it fund programs and re-grants? Possibilities include:
• State tax credits for corporations and individuals;
• A “cultural heritage” license plate;
• An annual allocation from the Oklahoma Legislature;
• Income tax designation; and/or
• Property transfer tax.

What is the plan of action?
• Secure a $40,000 “Connecting to Collections” grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to fund a feasibility study (secured).
• Develop opinion surveys to assess public support (ongoing).
• Develop institutional surveys to assess needs of cultural organizations (ongoing).
• Host Cultural Summit focus group meetings in strategic locations around the state to engage stakeholders and seek further input (March 2009).
• Develop and implement a Cultural Heritage Action Plan that addresses the needs identified in the institutional surveys and focus group meetings (May 1 release).
• Launch an advocacy campaign to introduce legislation to authorize funding for cultural collections (ongoing).

Will the public support the concept?
As the quotes in the side bar indicate, Oklahomans care deeply about their heritage. A public opinion survey, from which the quotes were drawn, indicates that 86% of people support the concept of the Trust, while 100% believe that state government should provide support of at least $1 per Oklahoma resident on an annual basis.