

ACE INFO GATHERING SUMMER ROAD TRIP - APPENDIX 3

AUGUST 5-7, 2008

Itinerary

AUGUST 5

7:00am	Leave Edson
10:30am	Arrive in Athabasca
10:45-12:45	Meet with Athabasca people; tour facility
2:00	Leave Athabasca
3:15	Arrive in Fort Saskatchewan
3:30-5:30	Meet with Fort Saskatchewan people; tour facility
5:30	Leave Fort Saskatchewan
6:00	Arrive in Sherwood Park
6:15-8:15	Meet with Sherwood Park people; tour facility

AUGUST 6

8:00am	Leave Sherwood Park
9:00	Arrive in Leduc
9:15-11:15	Meet with Leduc people; tour facility
12:30	Leave Leduc
3:00	Arrive in Rosebud
3:15-5:15	Meet with Rosebud people; tour facility
5:30	Leave Rosebud
7:00	Arrive in Sundre
7:15-9:00	Meet with Sundre people; tour facility

AUGUST 7

9:00	Leave Sundre
12:00	Arrive in Westlock
1:15-3:15	Meet with Westlock people; tour facility
3:30	Leave Westlock
4:30	Arrive in Spruce Grove
7:00-8:30	Meet with Spruce Grove people; tour facility
8:45	Leave Spruce Grove
10:30	Arrive in Edson

ACE ROAD TRIP

Questions

1. When was the facility built?
2. How was it funded when it was built?
3. What was the community reaction to building it? (supportive, negative, etc)
4. What are the operational costs of the facility? Who pays for it? Is there an agreement with neighbouring municipalities to fund any costs?
5. Who operates and oversees the facility?
6. What type of events does the facility hold each year? Are there any other uses for the facility?
7. What groups within the community use the facility?
8. Are there any regular users who may not be in existence if it wasn't for the facility?
9. Are there any major tourist type of events associated with the facility? (ie Fringe Festival, Major Concerts)
10. Are there a lot of sold out events?
11. Do a lot of youth groups use the facility? (schools, dance groups, etc.)
12. Do you have a theatre season? Do you bring in "big name" artists to perform?
13. How many seats does your facility have? Do you recommend a "magic" number of seats when designing a theatre?
14. What are your rental rates?
15. What is the thing the facility could not do without? (volunteers, theatre technician, certain equipment, rehearsal space, bar/restaurant, etc.)
16. If there was anything you could change about the design of the facility what would it be?
17. What is the biggest benefit for the facility?
18. What is the biggest challenge you face?
19. Is the community supportive of the facility today?

ACE ROAD TRIP

Theatre Descriptions & Relevant Notes

NANCY APPLEBEE THEATRE: ATHABASCA

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop. of approx. 3000
- Attached to an archives building
- Seats 280, 1-2 wheelchair seats
- Built in 1980, primarily by volunteers
- Thrust stage
- Piano
- 1 dressing room with bathroom and sinks, sound feed from stage
- Raked seating
- All lights are accessible by ladder
- Cyclorama
- Very little storage space – used by local high school through an old agreement
- Small booth above seating area
- Small lobby
- Concession area within the theatre itself, not the lobby



Other Facilities on Site

- Town archives

Way Facility is Used

- Professional shows
- Church group – every Sunday
- Fringe
- weddings/funerals
- Forums
- High school productions
- Dance groups – some use it weekly (performances take precedence)

Professional Season

- N/A

Staff

- Town employees control the booking and cleaning of the facility
- Volunteers take care of lighting and sound equipment

Financing and Administrative Structure

- theatre operated by the city and county
- employees paid by the city
- theatre rental \$240.00/day; \$60 with lights; \$40 without lights

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- Professional performances in a small community
- Another space to hold events

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- They are without a Theatre Manager to properly take care of the facility
- Lights and sound equipment needs renovating
- No storage space
- Booth needs to be bigger

Suggestions

- Be sure to have community support
- Build for the future

SHELL THEATRE: FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop. of approx. 17,000
- Located in a multi-use facility
- Seats 550 with up to 10 wheelchair accessible seats
- Relatively new facility (5 years?)
- 2 large dressing rooms with bathroom and sinks, sound feed from stage (can be used as small meeting rooms if needed), 2 small dressing rooms
- large green room (also doubles as meeting room)
- large stage, raked seating
- all lights accessible from catwalks except sidelights, use genie
- center of the house has power outlets for mics (questions from audience during presentations)
- sound system on side of stage so dance groups (in particular) can run their own music
- full booth with office space for techs



- live sound feed to greenroom, booth and lobby
- Hearing assist system (20 sets) for hearing impaired patrons

Other Facilities on Site

- daycare
- meeting spaces
- fitness facility and track
- arena (NHL size seats 200)
- leisure ice
- indoor soccer pitch – also used for larger banquets (1200 max)
- full kitchen which caters events and lunch daily
- large banquet rooms (weddings, seminars, meetings)
- pottery studio
- art gallery in theatre lobby

Way Facility is Used

- professional shows
- dance festivals
- theatre groups
- weddings/funerals
- concerts
- art gallery (lobby), art openings and receptions
- meetings/presentations/speakers

Professional Season

- city employee oversees organization of a professional season which includes music and theatre

Staff

- 2 fulltime technicians, city employees
- other city employees involved in managing theatre as well as other aspects of the facility
- volunteers run FOH during shows; essential to success – also need someone to coordinate volunteers

Financing and Administrative Structure

- theatre operated by the city as part of multi-use complex
- employees paid by the city
- very large corporate sponsorship in infrastructure
- theatre rental \$100.00/hr, includes one tech (technician must be on site when groups use theatre)
- groups run own concessions and merchandise booths, theatre takes 20% of profits

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- circuit on stage floor allow for footlight use

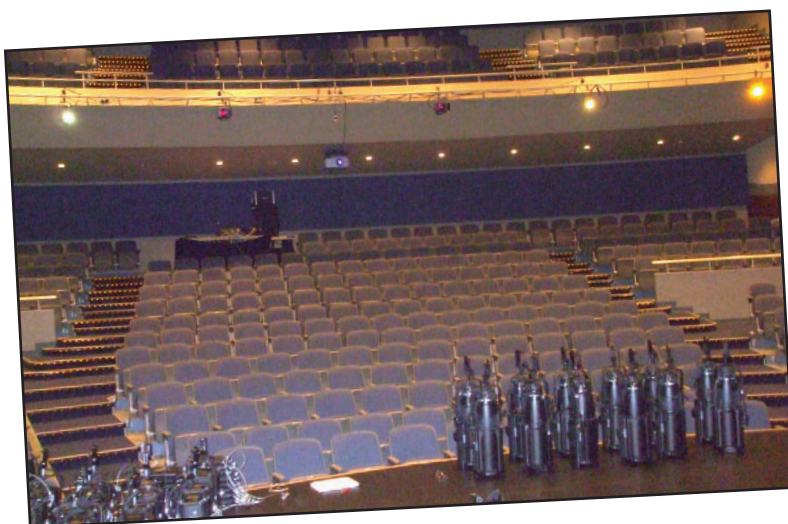
- community not completely on side at beginning but now is very supportive of the theatre and opportunities it creates for the community
- renters like the cleanliness of building and the extra help and caring attitude of technicians

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- sound board has to be moved for live music shows from booth to house
- orchestra pit can be removed but must be done manually
- floor circuits in wings are placed in high traffic areas where cables cannot be run under curtains and cables must be twisted to run them
- lack of storage for sets etc.
- dress circles have very poor sightlines
- drainage pipes run around stage (can hear during a storm)
- smaller groups (community) find it hard to fill the theatre but it is too small for very large shows or big names

Suggestions

- need multipin connection for sound cut down on time for setting up system
- cable runs at side of house so they don't run through the audience
- crossover at back of stage, especially for dance
- allow for lighting board to be used in house during tech rehearsals
- side lighting positions need to be accessible to change
- all pipes need access by catwalk or genie
- flytower is important if you want to bring in bigger shows
- having two travelers, one close to scrim and one at mid-stage, allows for shape and size of stage to be changed easily
- single cell ground units for cyc are easier to use than strip units
- shower in dressing rooms
- include backstage running lights as part of stage
- pipe sound from stage to all areas but have capability to turn off speakers in chosen areas



- make sure lighting circuits are close enough to pipes so extension cords aren't needed
- piano needs it's own storage area
- use locktight on house seats as bolts will wiggle loose
- include meeting space in facility as it adds lots of revenue
- work with community groups (especially school groups) to help them understand how much it costs to get what you want on stage (tech set up and rehearsal takes TIME!)

FESTIVAL PLACE: SHERWOOD PARK

Theatre Description and Background

- pop. of 82,000
- 3800sq/ft stage
- 496 seats
- sometimes do cabaret shows where tables are set up right next to stage for shows (music shows in particular)
- flytower
- 2 large and 2 small dressing rooms
- green room
- live feed from stage to backstage

areas

- used almost 100% of the time
- built in 1994 by "Strathcona County Heritage Trust Foundation" at a cost of \$6.5 million
- planning committee that designed building included people other than those focused on the arts so other commercial interests were included
- visual arts area was initially planned but area was taken over in order to make the building commercially viable
- city had nothing to do with facility initially, has since taken over the building only

Other Facilities on Site

- facility total size 20,000sq/ft
- banquet and meeting rooms
- kitchen
- large lobby
- beautiful park area surrounds building



Way Facility is Used

- concerts
- theatre events
- dance festival and recitals
- weddings/banquets
- meetings and seminars
- many commercial renters (small conferences and industry events) as well as local cultural groups and children's courses

Professional Season

- run a patio series in the summer, very successful and popular with community
- also run a café series in the lobby
- run own internal programs run by a part-time coordinator
- theatre used by many professional shows, has become a 'destination' for people as audience realizes that many acts come to Festival Place
- commercial radio the most important tool in selling shows at Festival Place
- have very current database used to contact patrons about events
- pick the amateur show to be done each season and hire a professional director for this production

Staff

- five fulltime staff runs the building, on salary – work lots of overtime
- 2 technicians
- do have volunteers to help run events

Financing and Administrative Structure

- set up as a society with a board, 2 council members on board
- staff on salary, must generate enough revenue to keep the building and program going
- do approx. \$1 million a year, make \$6000.00 off their own show
 - act as umbrella group for local children's and amateur theatre
 - balance seasons each year to ensure good sellers will offset shows which don't make money
 - theatre has one rental rate



\$450 per 5 hour block, including tech

- weddings bring in between \$500 and \$800 dollar each (generate lots of revenue)
- food and beverage very important to making facility commercially viable
- Canadian Heritage Grant is very important in running the building, city only pays for certain aspects of infrastructure and contributes nothing to operational expenses
- management driven facility

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- beautiful grounds
- theatre has opened up many new things for community members, things they wouldn't normally see

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- need more storage, a real issue when you deal with banquet facility (tables etc.)
- kitchen was added after, would have put this in the initial building
- need more accessible washrooms
- would like to get rid of events other than performing arts and community events but it's very difficult other functions (like weddings) make the facility commercially viable

Suggestions

- include food and beverage facilities
- plan your facility with commercial viability in mind
- think of, and operate, facility as a business
- make sure you plan in adequate storage

McLAB THEATRE: LEDUC

Theatre Description and Background

- pop approx 14,000
- 460 seat theatre
- attached to high school
- stage on floor
- all lights in FOH accessible by catwalk, on stage by genie
- wheelchair access



- lobby added 2005, property of school
- gyms at school are rented a rehearsal space
- internet connection in theatre
- raked seating
- loading doors and storage lock up for groups performing off side of stage
- 2 dressing rooms with bathroom and shower
- some tech space of loading area for painting, set repair etc.
- school has storage area under seating space
- booth in center at top of theatre, space for technician
- grand piano locked in it's own storage area

Other Facilities on Site

- high school
- large lobby area which school has access to during the day

Way Facility is Used

- school shows
- community theatre groups
- dance recitals
- professional series shows
- speakers

Professional Season

- theatre manager organizes and books a professional season each year (just began)
- 1st year of professional season averaged 217 per show

Staff

- 2 fulltime staff; theatre manager and technical director
- contract out for 2nd technician when needed
- school provides custodians
- a few volunteers who help with FOH
- Hire 2nd FOH person during shows to help run things
- students do run tech equipment but with technician to help

Financing and Administrative Structure

- Theatre runs with city, school board and Leduc foundation all involved
- school pays for power
- operates as a society with a board; all accounts run through this society
- money to operate comes from school, city and grants
- capital costs for equipment are paid for through the society
- some donations come from community

- theatre collects 15% of concession and merchandise sales
- there is different rates for profit vs. non-profit groups
- draws many people from Edmonton where theatre rentals are much higher
- groups using theatre must have \$2mill liability insurance policies

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- good sightlines for all seats

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- would like to have their own box office
- would add shop for small set repairs etc.
- rehearsal space and servery would add revenue potential
- sound/light locks (not presently in theatre)
- funding a big challenge
- box office/coat check set up don't get used much

Suggestions

- Make sure adjoining buildings are soundproofed
- Include rental space for rehearsals
- Need to include some downtime in schedule for maintenance

ROSEBUD THEATRE: ROSEBUD

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop. 100
- 220 seat theatre, converted community hall
- Renovated in 1991
- 25th season
- Dinner theatre, patrons eat first then go to show
- Began in 1983 as a school fund raiser
- 1986 switched from an arts based high school to a post-secondary school of performing arts
- Professional theatre finances the Rosebud Theatre School, a faith based performing arts program, currently not accredited but working towards accreditation
- 4 year post secondary program
- Theatre has lobby which runs along side of facility as well
- Stage has a trapdoor, used frequently



- Small dressing rooms off to side of stage; 2 dressing rooms
- Small wing space, stage approx 24'x40'
- use blacks for masking most of the time
- Mainstage hires professional actors and apprentices some students each show
- Handicapped accessible
- Dinners served in a separate building, heritage building, different rooms to eat in such as the 'garden room', the 'barn', the 'library' etc.
- Run their own wireless internet

Other Facilities on Site

- Full workshop
- Blackbox 70 seat studio theatre used for student shows and some professional shows
- Most people who live in Rosebud work for the theater and many rent out rooms for students in the program
- Art gallery

Way Facility is Used

- Professional dinner theatre shows

Professional Season

- Season runs throughout the year, professional shows which help finance the theatre school

Staff

- 24 permanent fulltime staff, 50 part-time staff (primarily in kitchen)

Financing and Administrative Structure

- Run as a business
- Receive no money from government, raise funds from donations, merchandise, tuition and tickets (primarily)
- Operating budget of \$2.2million per year
- Seats for the year average 70% sold – about 75% the patrons from Calgary and the rest from other parts of Alberta
- Older demographic
- Bus tours visit regularly, organized by tour groups (destination theatre)
- Don't rent venues but do host concerts occasionally
- 14 person board including members from the theatre, school, administration and education sector

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- Self sufficient
- Draw loyal audience

- Destination theatre
- Community of “like minded” artists

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- Size of stage
- Climate control in theatre (often hot)
- Size of dressing rooms

SUNDRE

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop . 2000, 5000 with surrounding area
- 180 seats
- Stage 16'x 48'
- 2 dressing rooms, green room
- Lighting grid accessed by ladder
- Fairly large storage area of side of stage
- Stage has no blacks
- Arts community used a seniors building until '99
- Peak Players, dance groups and choir started the idea of a theatre
- Community initially wanted a community hall
- Key to getting the building started was making it a “multiuse” facility
- Put together a prospectus and building model to show sponsors what the plan was
- Got corporate donors and added each one to the prospectus as new businesses donated
- Kept sending out an updated newsletter as the building was under construction
- Building was constructed entirely by volunteers
- Got lumber donated
- Took two years to build
- Small groups gave letter of support during the process
- Tin building with special fire retardant foam on roof
- Seating not fixed, not raked but two levels – can set up tables for a cabaret atmosphere
- Has projector and screen
- Built on school property



Other Facilities on Site

- Small kitchen
- Dance studio in lobby area

Way Facility is Used

- Theatre performances
- Dance performances and rehearsals
- Concert series
- School groups
- Oil companies
- Community events
- Weddings

Professional Season

- Volunteer organizes a professional series each year

Staff

- On hired staff, purely volunteer
- No town or county support
- Cleaner only paid staff member
- Can “rent” someone to do tech for a show but usually it’s a volunteer

Financing and Administrative Structure

- Building cost \$500,000 to build, volunteer labour and some donated supplies
- Used grants (matching labour was factored in) and corporate sponsors to build
- Also sold chairs and had patrons donate
- It’s a debt free building that operates for approx \$15,000 per year
- Operates as a society, arts society owns the building
- Society has a 40 year lease from school board on the land
- Sound and lighting equipment are owned by the theatre group (Peak Players)
- 50% of funding to build came from government

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- Building added quality shows to community and allowed dance group to grow
- Tin building is good for acoustic music shows

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- Would have made stage deeper (currently 16’)
- Building could have been bigger
- Board faces a challenge with personalities (disagreements)
- Volunteer burnout

Suggestions

- All levels of government need to be on side
- Make sure everyone involved understands the vision from the start
- Maintain a business sense
- Get a general contractor to oversee things, make sure someone is familiar with commercial code

WESTLOCK

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop 5,000; 18,000 in surrounding area
- 242 seat theatre
- Attached to high school
- Foyer/lobby area shared with school
- Theatre originally initiated by superintendent of school division
- 25 years old
- Theatre is well supported by school and was also supported by community
- Theatre on floor
- Seats very well maintained and spacious, can walk along aisles without people getting up
- 1 dressing room backstage above stage
- Upper area backstage also backs onto storage area
- Ladder used for lighting
- Projector and internet hook up
- Workshop room backs onto theatre
- Stage 56'x 32'



Other Facilities on Site

- School

Way Facility is Used

- Dance
- Drama festivals
- Music recitals
- Meetings
- Political functions

- Acts brought in, no ongoing rental groups

Professional Season

- Professional acts are brought in to theatre

Staff

- No fulltime hired staff
- Technicians and janitorial are brought in on an hourly basis
- Technicians are students who are trained and paid hourly
- Volunteers work for society which runs theatre
- Town does theatre bookings
- School does maintenance on building

Financing and Administrative Structure

- Financed by the school board and society jointly
- School uses theatre during the day but must rent space outside of school hours
- School covers all insurance maintenance and utilities
- Lighting and sound equipment co-owned by arts society, drama society and school division
- Town does all theatre bookings
- Different rates are charged to different groups
- Art society pays about \$20,000 - \$25,000 per year towards theatre maintenance
- Building originally cost \$623,000
- Town supported building from the outset, town and county both contributed money as well as school division
- User groups helped fund raise
- School shop program has built some of the storage units
- Raised money with brick/seat sponsorship

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- Theatre well supported by school
- Theatre allows community to bring in a diverse array of groups
- Seats are very comfortable
- Good site line and proper rake
- Both in right place and right size

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- No outside loading bay
- Larger workspace needed
- Policy needed to ensure user groups clear out their stuff

Suggestions

- Make sure you have storage
- Challenge not to burn out volunteers

ARDEN THEATRE: ST. ALBERT

Theatre Description and Background

- Pop 53,000
- 509 seat theatre
- Built as a community theatre in 1984
- 3800 sq/ft stage
- 4 dressing room, 2 large and 2 small
- Thrust stage with a sound system on stage (for dance groups)
- Orchestra pit, newly renovated with proper lift system
- Monitors for stage in all dressing rooms
- Under seating is extra lobby space and rehearsal space
- Video system with infrared in whole facility (for blackouts)
- Internet throughout building
- Wheelchair access in 2 spots
- Large booth
- Grid access for all FOH pipes, concrete grid (excellent)
- Flytower



Other Facilities on Site

- Art gallery
- Pottery studio
- Library
- Town hall
- Retail shop for artwork
- Located in beautiful park setting

Way Facility is Used

- St. Albert Children's Theatre resident group
- St Albert Children's Festival
- Extensive professional season
- High school programs, shows
- Dance festivals
- Dance recitals
- Drama camps
- Forums
- Speakers

Professional Season

- Staff books an extensive theatre, music and guest speaker season

Staff

- City employees
- 3 technicians fulltime, others brought in on a contract basis
- 7 other office staff

Financing and Administrative Structure

- City oversees and finances facility
- Was originally built based on initiative by the city to have a theatre attached to the new city hall building
- Theatre is used 95% of the time
- Rental rates include 2 technicians and volunteers
- Arden office staff does grant applications
- Professional series pays for itself but rentals do not, subsidized by city



- Operates as part of the community service board
- Schools don't pay for facility except for tech time, community groups also pay less – part of ongoing community use agreements

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- kids getting involved with performing arts
- community loves programming
- lots of sell outs, community events are approximately 2/3 of programming at theatre (professional events the other 1/3)

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- Flytower is 15' short
- Lack of storage space, shop is now used for storage
- Getting city to understand that facility takes money to maintain

Suggestions

- Lots of wing space
- Trapdoors, very useful
- Get a good theatre consultant to be present in the building and planning process
- Windows in the booth should be removable
- Leave area for sound in the house

HORIZON STAGE: SPRUCE GROVE

Theatre Description and Background

- Draws from Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and surrounding area
- 26 years old
- 318 seats
- In high school
- Currently being renovated
- 2 dressing rooms, no showers
- Street level loading dock
- Two booths, one on lower level for sound and other above for lights, sound and stage management
- Small lobby for all shows, can be expanded by using school
- Community initiated theatre, initial purpose to bring culture to the community
- 34'x 16' curtain opening with 12' thrust
- Storage under bleachers
- FOH catwalks
- 2 sound boards to facilitate theatre shows and live music shows
- Floor is linoleum, long lasting but not screw in, sandbags will be provided for groups
- Video feed in booth, green room and office
- Soundproof space



Other Facilities on Site

- High school

Way Facility is Used

- Horizon Players (don't pay for rehearsal time if space is available)
- Drama camp in summer
- 280 shows per year
- Canada Day Events
- Dance recitals
- Outreach to schools
- Speakers
- Professional artists

Professional Season

- Includes 26 to 30 shows per year, began when theatre was built
- Organized by city employee

Staff

- 2 fulltime technicians,
- Technical director
- Box office
- Publicist
- Manager
- All city employees who work on other events as well
- Volunteers are trained to do some tech and FOH

Financing and Administrative Structure

- Owned and operated by the city, cost of running subsidized by the city
- Spruce Grove and Parkland County built theatre and now have a joint use agreement with the high school which include custodial
- Fund raisers initially include Kinsmen and community fund raisers
- Theatre advisory board helps make decisions
- Society looks after FOH, product management., concession and also sponsors 4 shows
- Low rentals from non-profits groups
- School provides maintenance and janitorial but trade off is school uses dressing rooms and needs them a lot of the time
- Drama program in the school can use the theatre during the day at no cost if it is available
- School has hourly rate (cheaper than standard rate) to use theatre when doing a performance
- Other high schools in Parkland County can also use theatre for reduced rates

Strengths and Benefits of Theatre

- intimacy of theatre a real benefit

Weaknesses and Challenges for Theatre

- administration for theatre is in town office, removed from site
- drama room is constantly in use so it's difficult to find space when a traveling show comes in with equipment
- community of this size could use a 700 seat theatre
- had trouble finding a company to do the renos
- volunteer burn out

Suggestions

- don't put air intake near loading dock (fills theatre with fumes)
- make sure there is an office for technicians and technical director on site
- consider banquet facilities

- rehearsal space can bring in revenue
- get wireless mics for space (6 good number)
- make sure you have theatre consultant and acoustician involved in design and building process
- technician who will be working on site should be hired during building process