

Submitter: John Petrie
On Behalf Of: Historic Elsinore Theatre
Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small
Business, and Trade
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3191

My wife, Gloria and I have been associated with the Elsinore Theater for many years. We are both Hamlet Society members, Gloria has served as an outsourced bookkeeper, and I currently serve on the board of directors.

Why does the Elsinore Theater deserve these funds? Since Tom Fohn and his incredible team took over the operations, we have witnessed a remarkable improvement in the quality of shows, the physical venue, efficiency of operations, and community engagement. The Elsinore Theatre is fast becoming the arts & entertainment hub of the mid-Willamette Valley.

The Shows: Where else can you attend “Rocky Horror Picture Show” one night, and the World Ballet Company’s presentation of “The Nutcracker” shortly thereafter? Stage, comedy, movies, musicians... the Elsinore presents all types of entertainment, from a diversity of sources. Jake Shimabukuro, anyone? (YouTube him and thank me later)

The Venue: Visit the theatre. Take a tour. Stand on the stage. Take a deep breath and be proud of what Tom & Company are creating. The performers love it. The attendees love it. With a near perfect seating capacity of 1,290, the setting is intimate, yet large enough to attract top quality entertainment. Between the floor, mezzanine, and balcony, every seating location is a great location. This amazing venue is truly awe inspiring.

Operations: Tom and his team do more with less. A recent review of similar sized theaters revealed that the average number of paid staffers required to run each operation is 20+. The Elsinore Theatre functions with a team of nine. Nine committed, loyal, passionate warriors that have taken ownership of their duties under Tom’s leadership. Add in hundreds of local volunteers that joyfully support this small and mighty team and you have something special. WE have something special.

Community Engagement: Fading are the days when the attendees at the Elsinore Theatre resembled a local senior center. Don’t misunderstand, the senior community still supports the Elsinore Theatre en masse, and continues to provide critical support, both financially and as volunteers. THANK YOU. Looking forward, the Elsinore Theatre is additionally attracting a much more diverse crowd from our community. The comedy shows and several musical acts have attracted a youthful audience. Ethnic diversity in shows and audiences is on the upswing. The secret is

out, and as a result, attendance is growing. The Elsinore Theatre is an entertainment hub for ALL, regardless of ethnicity, age, socioeconomic factors, and personal beliefs. There is something for everyone.

In sum, The Elsinore is a jewel that we must preserve for our community and for our future. The money requested in HB3191 will make a substantial impact towards the completion of Phase 1 - the façade & capital improvement projects. I encourage everyone involved in this process to consider the value that a destination venue like the Elsinore Theatre brings to Salem, the Willamette Valley, and the entire state of Oregon. Thank you for your ongoing support.

~John Petrie