

# LIBERTY THEATRE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2025



“ Why would tourists come to this area to begin with if it wasn't for the beauty of our culture – to see the mountains and beaches?

**MARC SAVOY**

*FROM CAJUN MUSIC'S JOURNEY: FROM MAMOU TO NEWPORT TO WOLFTRAP*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION	1
	VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES	3
	METHODOLOGY	5
	THE STRATEGIC PLAN	7
	IMPLEMENTATION	32
	STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH	35
	PEER RESEARCH	43
	ATTACHMENTS	53



## *Dear show-goers, curious tourists, and cultural advocates everywhere –*

In 1987 my parents, Marc and Ann Savoy, along with a dedicated group of friends and partners, the City of Eunice, and the U.S. Department of the Interior, took on the effort of revitalizing the Liberty Theatre - an architectural jewel in Downtown Eunice with the potential to showcase Louisiana culture to our community and to the world. They succeeded in launching an iconic venue right here in Eunice - the heart of the Cajun Prairie, the old stomping grounds of Dennis McGee – the Grandfather of Cajun Fiddle, where nearly 50,000 people once gathered for the Tri-Parish Fair, and where we still host the largest *Courir de Mardi Gras* you can find. For decades the renovated theatre thrived, hosting the weekly *Rendezvous des Cajuns* radio show and attracting visitors from across the globe to come share in the magic of our culture.

I grew up in this theatre. My musical interests and influences came to life at the Liberty. The same is true for others as well – for generations of young and old Louisiana Cajuns and Creoles who came together to celebrate, dance, learn, and have a good time – no matter who they were or where they came from. But in recent years the venue has gone downhill in spite of the best efforts of a few passionate individuals, and with the HVAC system in disrepair, the doors have closed.

It's my belief that Eunice needs the Liberty Theatre and the Liberty Theatre needs Eunice. It is a community asset that has the power to provide enriching, transformative experiences for locals and visitors alike, and to greatly improve quality of life in our historic city. It has the potential to connect our culture to the roots and customs of cultures around the world, and to put us on the map as the center point of a globally renowned way of life.

With the help of a core group of supporters and an incredible board of directors, I hope to bring life back to the theatre. This plan – built on the input and ideas of many stakeholders in the surrounding community – charts the course for how we are going to do it. Thank you for reading – I hope you'll join in our effort.

Sincerely,



Joel Savoy

Board Chair, The Association for  
the Liberty Theatre of Eunice



# INTRODUCTION

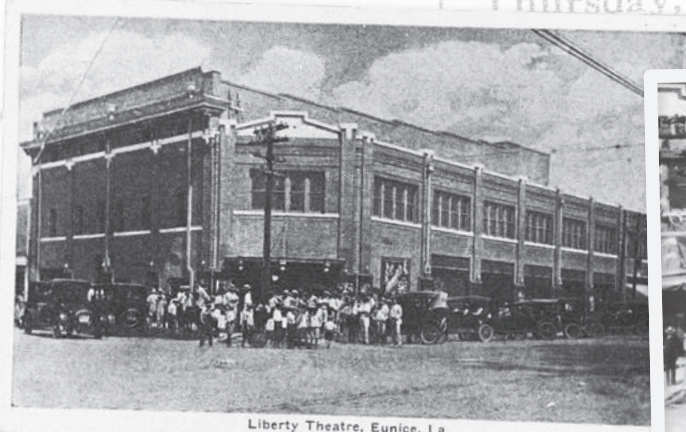
The Liberty Theatre and its programming have been important to Southwest Louisiana and its people for many generations – entertaining, informing, celebrating, preserving and transmitting culture. Building on this past, we undertake now to continue and grow that heritage for current and new generations.

## HISTORY

For the greater part of a century from its 1924 grand opening, the Liberty Theatre has been a cultural beacon shining across Eunice, the historic Tri-Parish area and all of Southwest Louisiana, offering a premiere ‘Temple of Amusement’ and recognized for innovatively engaging audiences with Hollywood films of The Golden Age, visiting stars of silent films of the Twenties and box office dynamite of the War Years. Through the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, the War Years, and the post-war boom, thousands of visitors weekly poured through its doors to see the world in flickering silent movies and in Widescreen Technicolor. As the largest and grandest venue on the Cajun prairie, the theatre became a regular stop for stumping politicians from ‘The Kingfish’ Huey P. Long onward. Roaring Twenties Charleston dance contests, weekly Rotary Club meetings, and community celebrations of all sorts brought visitors from throughout the area and from far beyond. Like many other movie ‘palaces’, the theatre went dark in the 1980s, a victim of multiplex cinemas, broadcast television, the rise of video stores, and home viewing.

In 1987, a group of local cultural champions engaged the U.S. Department of the Interior and the City of Eunice, including then-Mayor Curtis Joubert, to renovate and re-open the theatre as the interpretive cultural and performance component of the National Parks’ Jean Lafitte Acadian Cultural Center. Landmarked on the National Register of Historic Places and the National Trust’s Guide to Great American Movie Houses, the Liberty Theatre opened again to host live performances, serving as home to the nationally renowned Rendezvous des Cajuns radio and television show, as home to the Eunice Community Band, and showcase for touring performers and community celebrations. In the decades that followed, Eunice and the surrounding communities of Acadiana enjoyed a cultural stronghold. Children learned to dance, Cajun bands competed for the coveted opportunity to headline, and audiences took in cultural and musical acts from Cajun and Zydeco, to Country and Western, to local holiday performances from area choirs. Visitors from six continents regularly attended shows, which were broadcast on regional radio and television stations and reported upon by national media, making downtown Eunice the epicenter of interest in Cajun music.

In 2020, mechanical problems with the HVAC system along with the COVID-19 pandemic halted indoor, live performances and led the theatre to temporarily close its doors. Still, the venue has cemented itself as a cultural and architectural landmark for Eunice, and the most iconic photographs of the city feature the Liberty Theatre corner at 2nd and Park as the backdrop.



“The Dare Devil”  
Ben Turpin  
...and show for the

Wednesday, July 23rd  
Open 3 p. m. 5-20c  
“Scars of Jealousy”

## TODAY, TOMORROW & BEYOND

In 2020, community leaders concerned with the legacies of the past and potential for the future formed The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice (the Association) with the purpose of planning, renovating, programming, and re-opening the theatre as a cultural community asset, equally or more vibrant than at any time in the past.

There is opportunity to capitalize on the physical and cultural assets, documented history, and broad local, national and international interest to revitalize the facility and launch a program of presentations and activities that will showcase the best local and regional talent, affording a venue to present regional, national, and international performers visiting Louisiana.

With the dedicated effort and vision of its board, the Association has engaged architects with a passion for restorative, historical, and theatrical projects and is seeking

to preserve the historically important landmark, while modernizing the building in terms of amenities and function.

Concurrently, the Association is embarking on planning and execution of steps to program the theatre and ensure its long-term viability.

To lead development of a strategic plan, the Association's leadership engaged Phillip LaFargue to help set a course for governance, branding, marketing, fundraising, programming, and sustained community excitement through the launch of a restored Liberty Theatre and beyond.

Through strategic vision and planful action, the Association has an opportunity to breathe new life into the theatre, and to bring back a thriving cultural hub right in the heart of the Cajun prairie.



# VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

## VISION

**An experiential destination known locally, regionally, and worldwide for celebrating Louisiana's dynamic heritage and being a crossroads for the cultural roots of humankind.**



## MISSION

To support and develop the cultures of Louisiana through interpretive programming, showcasing of the very best talent, and building connections with the artists, artisans, and purveyors of other world cultures.

## VALUES

### PASSION

We strive to make the Liberty Theatre successful because we feel strongly about our vision and mission, and that passion motivates us to achieve excellence in programming, facilities, fundraising, and promotion while creating an incredible and enriching experience for audiences.

### CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Our mission is rooted in local Louisiana culture, and our success is measured in part by an ability to preserve and perpetuate the Cajun and Creole cultures of South Louisiana and their derivatives through programming.

### CULTURAL OPENNESS

While we value preservation, we also believe that stagnation is lethal to culture. Our theatre is successful when it aids in the exposure, cross-pollination, and evolution of cultures – both local and from other regions.

### DIVERSITY

As a cultural organization, we have a passion and a responsibility to not only bring a diversity of cultures into the spotlight, but to reflect that approach within our own organization to make us better.

### PARTNER EXPERIENCE

Our core offering is experiential, and our priority is to create transformative and enlightening experiences for our audiences, performers, organizational partners, and rental patrons through incredible products, services, and entertainment.

### COMMUNITY

Fulfillment of our vision will be an incredible contribution to Eunice, to Acadiana, and to our state. This outcome is intentional, and shows up in our direct efforts and indirect impacts. We encourage community engagement among staff and board, and realize it through our outreach and programming.

# METHODOLOGY



## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to develop this strategic plan was one involving community outreach, collaboration, and iteration. The strategies contained herein were informed by stakeholder input and thoughtful brainstorming and evaluation. Hopefully, as a result of the methodology outlined below, the plan will be ambitious, but achievable, and will result in the launch and operation of a tremendous community asset for Eunice, Acadiana, and the state of Louisiana.

- Kickoff meeting with Liberty project leadership to review needs, objectives, process, participation, and timelines for the effort
- A review of organizational materials developed and planning done to date
- A stakeholder survey completed by 40 members of the arts and cultural scene of Acadiana, economic development officials, board members, and historical champions of the theatre
- In-depth interviews with the following 15 individuals:
  - » Board Members
    - Joel Savoy, Chair
    - Paul Feavel
    - Celeste Gomez
    - Laura Pitre
    - Charles Seale
    - Pat Dossman (unavailable for full interview)

### » Community Stakeholders

- Barry Ancelet, Professor Emeritus of Francophone Studies and Center for Louisiana Studies Research Fellow at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette
  - Greg Brown, Cajun French Music Association
  - Lacey Chatagnier, Louisiana Economic Development
  - Herman Fuselier, St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission
  - Terry Huval, Musician and former Director of Lafayette Utilities System
  - Jean Johnson, CPA
  - Sam Oliver, Acadiana Center for the Arts
  - Steve Riley, Steve Riley Productions
  - Ann Savoy, Author and Musician
  - Nick Spitzer, American Routes
- Peer research of three theaters:
    - » Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA
    - » The Grand Opera House of the South, Crowley, LA
    - » Bristol Old Vic Theatre, Bristol, UK
  - A one-day strategy workshop with the Board of Directors of the Association for the Liberty Theatre
  - Drafting, design, and refinement of a strategic planning document in collaboration with Liberty Theatre project leadership
  - Board adoption of the strategic plan

**Special thanks to these partners for their support and participation in this planning effort:**



# THE STRATEGIC PLAN




PROGRAMMING

HOW MIGHT WE BECOME THE HUB OF THE SOUTH

- Marketing
- Quality Programs
- Target quality performers - diversity
- DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS
- Sponsorship
- Social Media
- Diversity
- SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

HOW MIGHT WE GENERATE THE QUALITY BUT NOT THE COST OF DES CAJONS

- Pop Culture Events
- Registering out other tracks/Venues using Maffett's List
- Giving them quality content
- Bring back DIVERSITY in... diversity, etc
- Quality Performance Sustaining Programs
- Use tech like Virtual on demand Content
- Teaching Possibilities Can attract Younger



Through the research process, key strategic themes emerged as focus areas for the Liberty Theatre, along with a framework for developing strategic initiatives in each area. The following plan represents key actions for the Association to undertake starting immediately and continuing over the course of the next five years and beyond. This plan is the culmination of extensive stakeholder engagement and collaborative discussion and creative brainstorming with the board to respond to insights and needs that emerged from the strategic planning process. In all, this plan outlines 16 major initiatives to be undertaken across six focus areas.

## FOCUS AREAS

- 1 - Facility Renovation
- 2 - Organization and Governance
- 3 - Resource Development
- 4 - Branding and Marketing
- 5 - Programming
- 6 - Community Engagement and Partnerships

# 1 - FACILITY RENOVATION

The building and theatre have become architectural landmarks for Eunice and while the Association wants to preserve the historically significant design, the building needs to be modernized in terms of amenities and function. Facility renovation is a first foundational step for relaunching the Liberty Theatre, and the board has established the following principles for the restoration effort:

- Historic Preservation
- Building Use Sustainability
- Instill Pride for the Community
- Variety of Programming Options
- Highlight Cultural Asset
- 2024 Completion for Centennial Celebration
- Artist Resources

## GOAL

Work with a skilled team of architects and constructors who bring experience and creativity to the table to realize the board's vision for the future of the Liberty Theatre

## 1A. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND RENOVATION

### i. Architect Selection

- » Provide architecture vendor(s) with the scope developed by the board and captured in Attachment B: Liberty Theatre Architectural Scope and invite the firms to submit proposals for how they would approach the effort
- » Interview firm(s) to provide the opportunity for live, interactive presentations and engagement
- » Evaluate proposal(s) according to factors such as
  - *Experience – Does the firm and its proposed team exhibit skills and experience working with historical culturally focused theatre/performance venues or comparable restorations?*
  - *Design approach – Is the firm's creative and aesthetic approach in line with the board's desire for historical preservation balanced with modern amenities ?*
  - *Cultural and work-style fit for the organization – Does the firm's work plan fit with the board's preferences and do they show that they prioritize the board's imperatives and preferences for the renovation?*
  - *Cost – Does the proposed cost represent great value for the effort and is it within the organization's budgetary constraints?*
- » Select a firm and enter into a contract for the renovation

## TIME FRAME

Select architects in Q1 of 2021, finalize design within four months; complete construction by end of 2023, open theatre doors for Mardi Gras 2024

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Selection of a qualified and skilled architecture firm
- Consensus on a design that will achieve the board's vision
- A design and construction process that hits budget and timeline targets
- Construction milestones with impact that can be leveraged for fundraising
- A theatre post-construction that wows attendees and provides a world-class venue for performance and interpretive cultural programming

## **ii. Architectural Design Process**

- » Kick off with architects including a walkthrough of the theatre to discuss scope items in detail
- » Work with selected architects according to their design process, including multiple rounds of design review and refinement until the final direction is agreed on by the board

## **iii. Construction**

- » Oversee a construction process in coordination with the architectural team to ensure compliance with the board's vision and the architectural design
- » Coordinate construction milestones so they can be leveraged for marketing, communications, and fundraising – show the community and donors evidence their dollars are being well spent
- » Open the theatre doors to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Liberty Theatre in 2024



## 2 - ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The Association has established a strong group of founding board members but will need to branch out and diversify its organization as the Liberty Theatre relaunch progresses, adopting formal practices in governance and eventually building a lean, effective staff to operate the venue.

### GOAL

Establish formal structures to enable board growth and efficacy, as well as organizational continuity as board members turn over

### 2A. BOARD DEVELOPMENT

#### i. Board Structures

- » Draft bylaws for the Association and board governance, establishing at a minimum:
  - *Board officer designations*
  - *Parameters for board composition, including any organizations that need to be represented at all times as well as a maximum number of board members*
  - *Board member nominating and appointment process as well as applicable term limits*
  - *Definition of a fiscal year and designation of an annual meeting*
  - *Board meeting procedures and frequency, including voting procedures and constitution of a quorum*
  - *Minimum board member participation requirements*
  - *Recruitment, onboarding, and retention strategies for board members*
  - *Required committee structures*
  - *Procedure for amending bylaws*
- » Create a template for a standing board meeting agenda that covers topics to be addressed at each board meeting
- » Develop a board matrix that lists desired board composition characteristics on one axis (professions, demographics, skill sets, etc.) and current board members on the other for analysis of gaps in target board composition
- » Use the board matrix to develop a list of board member needs and seek out board members to fill them



## TIME FRAME

Review bylaws in Q1 2021 and adopt by Q2, fill board slate by FY 2022, commence board trainings in Q2 2021

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Review of bylaws and establishment of board structures
- Filling of board slate with targeted board member needs
- Confidence in abilities of board members to represent the Association in accordance with training topics and priorities

## ii. Topical Training

- » Establish regular educational components of board meetings to educate board members on topics vital to the Liberty Theatre so they can be effective brand ambassadors – topics may include:
  - *Musical and cultural histories*
  - *Fundraising, outreach, and networking*
  - *Liberty Theatre heritage*
  - *Eunice, Acadiana, and Louisiana history*
  - *Regional economic development topics, including culture, recreation, and tourism*
  - *State and federal resources*
  - *Best practices in theatrical production and technology*



## GOAL

Build an exceptional, dedicated staff to sustain successful operations of the Liberty Theatre

## TIME FRAME

Establish organizational structure in Q2 2023 and begin recruitment in Q3 with a goal of having appropriate staff in place in time for the re-opening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Clarity of a staffing model in sufficient time prior to re-opening
- Successful staff recruitment and onboarding
- Clear employment policies
- High levels of staff performance and retention

## 2B. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### i. Organizational Structure Development

- » Review best practices in theatre and nonprofit organizational models in peer organizations
- » Build an organizational chart customized for the needs of the Liberty Theatre addressing needs such as:
  - *Executive administration*
  - *Accounting and finance*
  - *Programming and technical production*
  - *Marketing and promotion*
  - *Accounting and resource development*
  - *Facility maintenance and operations*
  - *Artist and customer hospitality*
- » Prioritize staffing according to organizational growth and needs

### ii. Staffing Up

- » Write job descriptions for staff roles and establish compensation models
- » Develop an initial employee handbook detailing:
  - *Benefits offering*
  - *HR policies*
  - *Employee performance evaluation and compensation adjustment structure*
  - *Professional development opportunities*
- » Identify office space and/or remote work policy
- » Develop recruitment, onboarding, and retention strategies for employees
- » Recruit, hire, onboard, and lead team to success

## 3 - RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

As an arts staple in rural Acadiana, and in the heart of a region vital to a culture known worldwide for its musical, culinary, and celebratory customs, the Liberty Theatre has a compelling story and dynamic opportunity to raise funds for successful operations. As the theatre sees success and builds a reputation as a crossroads for interpretive showcase for cultures across the country and the world, it will further establish the venue and the Association as an investment opportunity for philanthropists who value creativity, quality of life, and heritage in the community. To capture the potential for donor cultivation and fundraising, the Association will need to invest in the appropriate infrastructure and make giving opportunities clear and easy for supporters at all levels.

### GOAL

Implement a chart of accounts, appropriate reporting structures and a technological fundraising platform that makes it easy for donors to support the Liberty Theatre and empowers board and staff to comply with regulatory requirements and to fundraise effectively

### TIME FRAME

Implement fundraising technology in Q1 2021 and integrate with web platforms as the theatre's digital presence is built out

### SUCCESS METRICS

- Adoption of a chart of accounts
- Accounting system implementation
- Adoption and implementation of a fundraising records system

### 3A. FINANCIAL AND FUNDRAISING INFRASTRUCTURE

#### i. Chart of Accounts + Reporting

- » Determine reporting requirements for the IRS Form 990
- » Determine reporting requirements for the board
- » Develop a chart of accounts supporting requirements
- » Implement an accounting system based on the adopted chart of accounts and the available inputs from fundraising

#### ii. Budgeting

- » Develop and adopt a preliminary 2021 annual budget
- » Develop and adopt a preliminary outline budget for 2022 – 2023 including planning, capital investments, operations, fundraising, marketing, and programming
- » Develop a preliminary outline budget for 2024 (opening year)
- » Develop a preliminary outline annual budget for 2025
- » Review financials and revise 2021 annual budget at least quarterly
- » Review financials and plan developments and revise preliminary outline budgets at least semi-annually

#### iii. Fundraising Technology

- » Research fundraising tools and technologies developed to support a nonprofit arts and cultural organization that integrates customer relationship management, marketing, and fundraising transactions and accounting
- » Consider how the tools and technologies can best meet the needs and budget of the Association in the short term and scale over the long term as the organization matures and grows
- » Evaluate technologies and implement the option that works best

## GOAL

Run a successful campaign to fund renovation that meets or exceeds the Association's vision for the facility and operating needs up to re-opening

### 3B. A CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

#### i. Campaign Planning

- » Set ambitious but achievable goals for fundraising in terms of donors, dollars, and deadlines
- » Establish campaign leadership that meets regularly to develop and implement campaign strategy, and to identify, cultivate, and solicit donors
- » Develop a brand for the campaign and produce marketing resources that detail:
  - *The organization's vision*
  - *Architectural and programming plans*
  - *Ways to give*
  - *A compelling case for preservation and growth of the cultures of Eunice and Acadiana – putting Eunice on the map in a global conversation on culture, tourism, and entertainment*

#### ii. Quiet Phase

- » Focus on leads and major gifts that will achieve 70% or more of the overall fundraising goal through:
  - *Development and management of a target donor list and cultivation strategies leveraging the Association's networks*
  - *Development of incentives, such as exclusive tours and experiences, naming opportunities, challenge and matching opportunities, recognition opportunities and memorabilia*
  - *Presentations to foundation and association boards such as the Community Foundation of Acadiana*
  - *Targeted solicitations and follow-up, including acknowledgments and further opportunities to invest*
  - *Development of Public Phase plans*

## TIME FRAME

Establish preliminary campaign goals in Q1 of 2021, recruit leadership in Q2-Q4 2021, solicit leadership gifts Q1 2021-Q1 2022; launch Public Phase when 70% of goal has been secured

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Assembly of campaign leadership
- Identification of lead and major donor prospects; other donor groups
- Successful engagement of prospects
- Recruitment of donors and partners
- Achieving financial goals

### iii. Public Phase

- Target a broad audience of the general public to create interest, support, and additional resources with:
- *Attention-creating PR and marketing, including outreach to community groups and organizations, and sponsoring special events*
- *Direct outreach through social media, email, and events*
- *Create opportunities to participate in the campaign, such as the overall effort, specific projects, recognition tangibles such as commemorative tiles/bricks, ticketing licenses. and other means to be determined*
- *Direct and/or peer-based solicitations, acknowledgments, and promotions*
- *Link priority access to participation and promote those opportunities*



## GOAL

Build a structure of giving for supporters at all levels that clarifies how to give, what they are supporting, and donor benefits

## TIME FRAME

Establish annual giving plan by Q2 2023 and launch with re-opening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Donor engagement
- Net revenue from annual giving

## 3C. POST-REOPENING GIVING STRUCTURE

### i. Annual Giving Strategy

- » Develop an annual giving plan
  - *Membership tiers and associated benefits ranging from giving levels from \$100*
  - *Corporate and family sponsorships for pre- and post-reopening events and performances*
  - *Legacy giving*
  - *Volunteer opportunities*
- » Launch annual giving concurrent with the re-opening



## GOAL

Take advantage of all potential funding sources from public or private sources

## TIME FRAME

This work is already underway and should continue for the lifetime of the theatre; enlisting the support of a freelancer as needed should ideally occur prior to or at the time of reopening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Grants submitted
- Grants and funds received

## 3D. GRANTS AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT

### i. Making Revenue a Focus

- » Continue current efforts by the board to identify and seek revenue opportunities with the support of political champions
- » Research and track funding and grant opportunities to create a pipeline of targets for pursuit
  - Scour the landscape and apply for grants from public or private institutions, municipal fund allocations, tax incentives, special investment districts, bond issues, or any other possible sources
  - Engage elected officials, foundations, and other potential grantors to keep them updated on the theatre's progress and remain aware of funding opportunities on their radars
- » As campaign funds materialize, leverage them for other revenue sources that require a match
- » When the theatre has the financial capacity, enlist the services of a freelance or full-time professional focused on this initiative in an ongoing fashion



## 4 - BRANDING AND MARKETING

Branding and marketing functions will be critical at every stage of the theatre's path – from the campaign to the reopening to ongoing marketing of the theatre's programming. For each of those stages, how the Association invests in marketing will vary in a way that is aligned with strategic initiatives so that dollars are spent not just to make a splash, but to optimize return on investment.

### GOAL

Establish a strong, clear brand that communicates the theatre's personality and will serve the venue well for many years to come

### TIME FRAME

Q1 of 2021

### SUCCESS METRICS

- Brand positioning and visual identity elements that resonate with the Association and represent the theatre well
- Usable brand application tools

## 4A. BRANDING AND POSITIONING

### i. Naming and Positioning

- » Work with branding professional(s) to establish fundamentals of the brand:
  - Name (e.g. *The Liberty Center vs. The Liberty Theatre vs. The Liberty vs. The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice*) – how will people refer to the theatre and what will they search for?
  - Brand archetype (what is the brand personality that will connect with the general public?)
  - Brand voice (what is the tone of the organization's communications?)
  - Themes and topics (what are the types of topics theatre marketing and communications will talk/communicate about?)
  - Visual cues (what kinds of illustration and imagery will define the theatre's look and feel?)

### ii. Visual Identity System

- » Based on brand personality and positioning, work with branding and design professional(s) to develop primary and secondary visual identity elements:
  - Primary logo (mark and/or type)
  - Branded color palette
  - Branded font families
  - Appropriate vs. inappropriate logo usage
  - Secondary identity elements (e.g., iconographies, textures, poster elements, video elements)
- » Design standard visual identity applications:
  - Stationery (letterhead, business cards, envelopes, folders, etc.)
  - Branded templates (standard documents, presentations)



## GOAL

Support campaign fundraising through powerful, clear marketing and communications

## 4B. CAMPAIGN MARKETING

### i. Quiet Phase Marketing

- » As mentioned in the fundraising focus area, establish a campaign brand that ties in with the overall theatre brand
- » Design and build website 1.0 to house key content and messaging for fundraising
  - *Vision, mission, and brand for the theatre*
  - *Bios and headshots of board members and Kitchen Cabinet members for the campaign*
  - *Plans, renderings, and fly-throughs for the renovation showing the theatre, lounge, lobby, courtyard, and artist accommodations*
  - *Dynamic content about the people and personalities behind the relaunch of the theatre*
  - *A compelling case for preservation and growth of the cultures of Eunice and Acadiana – putting Eunice on the map in a global conversation on culture, tourism, and entertainment*
  - *An e-newsletter sign-up form for interested parties that gathers a sufficient amount of data that can be used in audience understanding and segmentation*
- » As mentioned in the fundraising focus area, develop printed materials and presentation to support Quiet Phase fundraising
- » Establish social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) to begin growing followers and sharing content
- » Produce a video featuring stories of board members, the history of the theatre, and the vision for the renovation and reopening

### ii. Public Phase Marketing

- » Design and launch website 2.0 with the addition of key Public Phase functionality and content (this list is additive to the 1.0 list):
  - *Ways for the general public to support the theatre financially and through volunteerism*
  - *Recognition as appropriate for those who have contributed to the campaign to date*
  - *A calendar of events and activations to build and sustain excitement prior to the theatre reopening*
  - *Previews of the types of programming being planned post launch*

- » Plan and launch a social media hashtag campaign to drive digital engagement and conversions
  - *Coordinate with regional education, tourism, arts, and economic development agencies to extend reach*
  - *Enlist performing artists to do streaming performances for fundraising*
  - *Feature “bite-sized” pre-recorded interviews and videos telling the story of the Liberty Theatre heritage and showing fly-through footage of the renovation plans*
  - *Invite the general public to tell their stories of what the theatre means to them, memories they have, and hopes for the theatre’s future through video and captioned photo posts using the hashtag*
  - *Invest in promoted posts through social media platforms*
  - *Drive viewers to the website to make contributions and submit information for the mailing list*
- » Implement regular distribution of the e-newsletter with compelling content, social media campaign and website tie-ins, and announcements of key dates and events
- » Plan and execute a groundbreaking event that has the feel of a real festival to make a splash, grow awareness and excitement, and cultivate broad support
  - *Plan an event in the area around the theatre with guests and performances that honor the theatre’s history and preview the kind of interpretive cultural content (from near and far) that will be a part of the theatre’s new programming*
  - *Invite media, public-sector officials and partners, cultural organizations, musicians, civic organizations, and celebrity guests to the event*
  - *Develop large-scale signage to showcase the renovations including a poster installation on the east side of the building that will remain in place for the duration of construction and be used in the future to feature programming highlights/advertisements*
  - *Dedicate a visual component if possible (a memorial statue or public art installation) that will mark the event, memorialize some aspect of the theatre, and remain as a visual addition to downtown Eunice*
  - *Use the event to announce exciting aspects of construction progress (e.g., cocktail lounge partner announcement and opening date, major donor and grants acknowledgments, celebrity appearances planned for the reopening/ribbon cutting)*

## TIME FRAME

Launch Quiet Phase marketing in Q2 2021 to support fundraising efforts beginning in Q3; launch Public Phase marketing to coincide with campaign and run until goals are reached and marketing transitions into marketing for general programming and fundraising post-reopening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Funds raised on time and on target
- Social media, website, and e-newsletter analytics and subscriber base
- Event attendance and engagement (physical and online), including funds raised
- Media mentions/appearances

- *Hold a ceremonial groundbreaking photo-op with elected officials, board members, and other key stakeholders*
  - *Provide tours of the space and construction in a way that is safe – include printed renderings placed throughout the space to help people envision the future*
  - *Preview specialty cocktails and/or small plates that will be featured in the lounge*
  - *Announce for attendees how they can support the theatre and make it possible and easy for them to do on site (e.g. “buy a brick”)*
  - *Live stream the event and enlist partners to spread the word and grow viewership*
- » Using the groundbreaking event as an anchor point, coordinate a PR effort to grow awareness through earned media
- *Write a press release with an embargo date to coincide with the groundbreaking event that highlights plans for the theatre and announces details for the Public Phase of the campaign*
  - *Schedule editorial board meetings with regional and state news outlets to update progress on design, construction, programming plans, and the campaign, and to preview details and run of show for the groundbreaking event*
  - *Coordinate media appearances on area radio stations and news channels to discuss details of the theatre renovation, campaign, hashtag campaign, and groundbreaking event accompanied by performances of music that has significance for the theatre*
- » Around or just following the groundbreaking event, pitch the Liberty Theatre relaunch story to regional arts and culture magazines like Country Roads, Garden & Gun, Southern Living, offBeat, etc.
- » Hold quarterly events to showcase theatre progress and performances and continue the excitement until campaign goals are reached
- *Celebrate the opening of the cocktail lounge*
  - *Stream events online to continue buzz and extend reach*
  - *Coordinate events with high-visibility opportunities like Mardi Gras, festivals, and holidays*
- » Plan and execute marketing and PR for when campaign goals are reached (this may coincide with the official reopening or may come well in advance)

## GOAL

Drive attendance and ticket sales in a sustained manner for ongoing theatre programming

## 40. MARKETING THEATRE PROGRAM AND FUNDRAISING

### i. Digital Marketing

- » Design and launch website 3.0 with the addition of programmatic marketing functionality and content (this list is additive to the 1.0 and 2.0 lists):
  - *Ticket packages*
  - *Performance calendar*
  - *Digital content packages and e-commerce functionality (see Programming focus area)*
  - *Special sales tools (e.g., a holiday gift guide)*
  - *Visitor information (modeled after effective tourism-oriented websites)*
- » Shift social media strategy to provide updates, previews, videos, and other compelling campaigns and content to market the theatre's season and special performances, including:
  - *Live and pre-recorded teaser videos featuring performers and other relevant personalities*
  - *Social media account takeovers*
  - *Fresh and shareable visual content such as temporary profile pics, filters for people within a geo-fenced area, banner image updates, stories, Instagram photos and videos, and unique artwork (e.g. show posters)*
  - *Ways to engage social media followers to help spread the word such as hashtag campaigns and selfie stations*
  - *Social media partnerships with partner organizations*
  - *Social media coverage of live events and guerrilla marketing efforts*
  - *Social media campaigns to bring awareness around membership drives and fundraising efforts*
  - *Seasonal content on social media to push the theatre's digital, heritage, and rental offerings*
  - *Analytics-driven promoted posts*

### ii. Traditional Marketing

- » Develop a budget, calendar, and marketing checklist for investments in traditional marketing channels (e.g. TV, radio, magazine/newspaper, printed media, etc.) for the theatre's tiers of shows
  - *Note: budgets may include flex space for cash or in-kind media sponsorship*

## TIME FRAME

Launch in Q3 of 2023 to be in full swing in time for the reopening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Attendance
- Ticket sales
- Digital content engagement and sales
- Number and health of community partnerships for performances
- On premise sales of alcohol and merchandise
- New and retained memberships
- Donations and gifts

- » Execute the marketing checklist for each show over the course of the year
- » Invest in a digital display for the side of the Liberty Theatre on Second Street near the marquee and keep updated with fresh visual content advertising programming
  - *Note: this could be considered as an opportunity for selling advertising slots to rotate in with the theatre's marketing visuals*
- » Explore cross-promotional marketing opportunities with other regional or related brands (e.g. breweries and food products, restaurants, event planners)
- » Work with tourism and hospitality partners to print and distribute show flyers and calendars in targeted locations

### **iii. Public Relations**

- » Develop an annual calendar (and revisit monthly/as needed) to plan ahead as much as possible for opportunities to send out press releases and media advisories, to schedule and hold editorial board meetings, and/or to go on local television and radio shows to promote upcoming events, for example:
  - *Season launches*
  - *Season headline acts*
  - *Festivals*
  - *Fundraising drives with associated special events*
  - *Outreach program launches*
  - *New and/or newsworthy partnerships*
- » Leverage the entertainment and cultural aspects of the theatre's offering to make PR efforts more entertaining and compelling for audiences (e.g., incorporate performance, cuisine, and art in PR efforts)
- » Execute the PR calendar consistently and reliably
- » Utilize initiatives from the Community Engagement and Outreach focus area as opportunities to speak regularly to interested target audiences about upcoming programming
- » Leverage the platforms of corporate partners, elected officials, sponsors, and other parties with shared interests to spread the word and create earned media opportunities
- » Guerrilla Marketing: bring performances and unique interactions into public spaces in Eunice, Lafayette, and other surrounding areas to connect with audiences in affordable but unique and memorable ways and build a buzz around the theatre and specific programs

## 5 - PROGRAMMING

With a vision to create an experiential destination known worldwide for showcasing Louisiana's dynamic heritage and being a crossroads for the cultural roots of humankind, programming will be a diverse mix of roots, folk, and indigenous music, cuisine, and culture from Louisiana and other regions. In addition, the Association will strive to create innovative heritage-oriented experiences and digital content offerings. A rental program will also invite partners and patrons to hold events in the historic renovated space while providing a revenue stream for the theatre.

### GOAL

Build a core, consistent, high-quality program offering that continues the Liberty Theatre tradition of interpretive cultural experiences

### 5A. CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

#### i. Rendezvous Part 2

- » Develop a Louisiana cultural program offering in the spirit of Rendezvous des Cajuns:
  - *A variety show featuring regional music acts known and unknown (usually more than one per show)*
  - *Features of a diversity of Louisiana cultures and genres*
  - *Visits by acts from other regions who can come to relate their culture to Louisiana culture*
  - *A charismatic emcee personality that can engage the audience, interview performers, discuss cultural topics (food, travel, French language, etc.)*
  - *Media partners (e.g., KRVS) that can broadcast the production and extend reach*
  - *Peripheral cultural programming during the day leading up to the on-stage performance (e.g., band members cooking their favorite dish in the courtyard, book and poetry readings in the lounge, acoustic performances featuring some members of the headliner)*
- » Identify ways to improve on the success of Rendezvous des Cajuns including timing and frequency, marketing, and content

## TIME FRAME

While some performances might accompany the campaign prior to reopening, the theatre's official cultural performances and events will kickoff with the reopening in Q1 2024

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Attendance and ticket sales
- Audience feedback
- Performer feedback
- Media reviews

## ii. The Liberty Season

- » Season Headliners
  - *Work with corporate sponsors to minimize risk and bring in larger acts from within or outside of Louisiana to create a big draw*
- » Community Programming
  - *Seek out local organizations such as schools, churches, and arts organizations who might be a good fit for the venue (e.g. Christmas concerts)*
- » Thematic Showcases
  - *Work with producers to develop programming around themes, topics, or individuals that have broad appeal in Acadiana (e.g. a country music showcase)*
- » Traveling Acts
  - *Seek out acts that are traveling between Texas and Louisiana to stop in Eunice for an additional gig earlier in the day or on an off night*
- » Festival Partnerships
  - *Work with regional festivals (e.g. Festival International de Louisiane, Festivals Acadiens, Black Pot Festival) to provide satellite supplemental event and performance space*

## GOAL

Expand the theatre experience and brand through interactive heritage exhibitions that bring magic and enrichment for audiences

## TIME FRAME

Develop heritage programs beginning in Q1 2022 with a goal of piloting on-site tour experiences at events and/or soft launches during the Public Phase of the campaign in the second half of 2022; full roll out of in-person and virtual offerings in place for the reopening in 2024

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Utilization of heritage tour assets
- Tour sales numbers
- Sales of associated merchandise

## 5B. INTERACTIVE HERITAGE OFFERING

### i. Story Development

- » Identify the topical focuses for heritage programming considering:
  - *The history of the theatre itself*
  - *Cajun and Creole culture in Eunice and rural Acadiana*
  - *Cajun Mardi Gras*
  - *Louisiana musical heritage*
  - *Francophone culture*
- » Identify partner individuals and organizations to help develop the heritage story
- » Develop an overarching story to tell with anecdotal individual stories of people, events, and artifacts to comprise the grander storyline (e.g., the story behind a certain song, the story of Amedée Ardoin, the story of the people that came together to reopen the theatre in the 1980s)

### ii. Exhibit and Tour Programming

- » Create a heritage exhibit and accompanying tour that tells the stories of the theatre leveraging the physical space, multi-media content, on-site digital interfaces, virtual experiences, and augmented reality

### iii. Heritage Offering Revenues

- » Develop a pricing strategy to monetize the heritage offering in a way that balances revenues and accessibility for all audiences
- » Build the heritage offering into group and meeting sales and leverage it as an added value for rentals
- » Develop and sell merchandise on-site and online that promotes the stories of the theatre and regional culture in a dignified manner



## GOAL

Create a robust digital content offering to expand the Liberty Theatre experience into people's homes, generating additional revenues and extending reach

## TIME FRAME

Prepare the theatre for digital production throughout the renovation process but begin creating, packaging, and selling digital content upon reopening in Q1 2024

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Digital content engagement analytics
- Digital content sales

## 5C. DIGITAL PROGRAMMING

### i. Digital Content Development

- » Include state-of-the-art production and recording capabilities in renovation
- » Identify and utilize a versatile and easy-to-use technology platform for housing, presenting, and selling digital content online
- » Develop a digital content strategy that complements cultural, musical, heritage, and other types of programming already taking place at the theatre
- » Capture performances and develop video and/or interactive digital content according to the strategy

### ii. Digital Content Packaging and Sales

- » Develop a digital sales strategy that addresses how content will be assembled, presented and sold primarily online
  - Consider what content is free or promotional vs. what content is “premium”
  - Organize and sell content in a meaningful structure with one-off, annual, seasonal, or topical purchasing options
  - Allow content to be purchased and given as gifts
- » Offer free streamable or downloadable content that engages audiences with aspects of the theatre's mission, such as family crafts and activities, workshops and tutorials, and previews of the heritage offering



## GOAL

Create and sell a rental offering that provides year-round revenues and financial predictability for the theatre

## TIME FRAME

Rental product development has begun and marketing and sales should ramp up in the months before the reopening

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Development of a rental product offering that meets the needs of the community
- Rental revenues
- Synergistic sales across related rental products (e.g., catering services along with events, courtyard space to accompany indoor space rental)

## 5D. RENTAL PRODUCTS

### i. Rental Product Development

- » Oversee a design and construction process that meets board-designated needs for rental options:
  - *A theatre that accommodates performances as well as corporate events and weddings by virtue of a convertible seating/flooring system*
  - *A catering kitchen*
  - *Cocktail lounge and optional satellite bars*
  - *Courtyard stage area*
  - *Comfortable dressing room and bathroom accommodations*
  - *Storage for event equipment*
- » Develop a rental program that addresses the following:
  - *Arrangements with cocktail lounge tenant and any potential food, event, or Audio/Visual vendors*
  - *Named spaces suitable for serving specific purposes and types of event customers*
  - *Details of rental products such as capacity per room per setup, a menu of costs*
  - *Timing to allow for the theatre's non-rental programming*

### ii. Rental Product Sales

- » Hire designated sales staff or make rental sales a substantial part of an employee's job to allow capacity for marketing, sales, and event coordination
- » Develop attractive print sales materials showcasing the rental options and program for use by staff in selling rentals
- » Build out a robust portion of the website to learn about spaces for rent, view photos of spaces in use, download promotional materials, and contact the rental sales resource
- » Incorporate rental sales into the theatre's social media strategy, keeping the space top of mind for followers so they think of the theatre when planning their own events and know what products are available and how to reserve them
- » Hold regular fam tours with associations, event planners, production companies, and other potential renters or ambassadors

## 6 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Board members have prioritized the need for the Liberty Theatre to be a visible, positive force in the community. With a community-oriented mission of supporting and developing the cultures of our state, it is a natural role for the Association to play to be proactive in outreach and cultural organization. In addition, the Association has an opportunity with the Liberty Theatre's unique importance to establish an advisory group comprised of Acadiana-area musicians and purveyors of local culture to consider and advise on topics of programming and policy.

### GOAL

Remain at the forefront of community conversations related to Downtown Eunice, arts and culture, tourism, education and outreach, and other areas connected to the theatre's mission

### TIME FRAME

Mission-aligned networking can start immediately with board members active in the community while outreach initiatives should commence in Q3 2024

### SUCCESS METRICS

- Growth of the theatre's network
- Community awareness of the theatre as an important asset
- Participation in outreach efforts
- Grant funds received for outreach efforts
- Media mentions and social media exposure for outreach efforts

### 6A. A PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

#### i. Mission-Aligned Networking

- » Develop and maintain a prioritized list of organizations and initiatives with which the theatre and staff should get engaged
- » Designate staff and/or board members to join and participate in meetings, represent the Liberty Theatre perspective, and report back to the organization on relevant updates

#### ii. Outreach Initiatives

- » Within the organization's means, explore opportunities (and grant funding) to leverage the facility, staff, and networks of the theatre to help communities in need and make the arts more accessible
- » Consider the following types of outreach
  - *Bringing arts and performances into area schools and nursing homes*
  - *Offering free camps or scholarships during the summer time or holidays*
  - *Partnering with charitable organizations to offer easy giving opportunities to audiences at performances*
  - *Host nonprofit organizations at discounted levels for their fundraisers and events*
  - *Provide off-hours facility access for nonprofit performance organizations that focus on bringing arts and culture to under-resourced populations*

## GOAL

Be an active asset for the arts and culture community for the region

## TIME FRAME

Establish committee structure and initial objectives by Q4 2022; hold first meeting in Q1 2023 to support theatre fundraising initiatives and begin preparation for re-opening; continue indefinitely

## SUCCESS METRICS

- Establishment of a high-quality, motivated committee with a clear charge
- Impact on theatre programming and arts and culture priorities
- Impact on relevant local and regional policy issues

## 6B. ARTS AND CULTURE ENGAGEMENT

### i. Cultural Advisory Committee (CAC)

- » Identify a structure for a committee that would allow for representation by critical geographies and cultural fields from Eunice and Acadiana
- » Develop rules of engagement, including how long committee terms last, what expectations are for each committee member, and a cadence and agenda outline for meetings (possibly quarterly)
- » Coordinate with area partners (e.g., St. Landry Tourism, Lafayette Travel, Cajun French Music Association) to avoid duplication and enhance cooperation
- » Based on needs identified through the structure, recruit participants for a founding CAC
- » Establish objectives and actions with the CAC oriented around leveraging the theatre facility as an asset for the arts and culture community, advancing cultural and programmatic priorities of the theatre, supporting the Association's strategic initiatives, making policy recommendations related to issues that impact theatre, culture, and the arts (e.g. Mardi Gras and festival coordination/planning, downtown development, and public investment in the arts), and strengthening the voice and impact of a coalition of cultural stakeholders



# IMPLEMENTATION

The six focus areas and associated strategies outlined in this plan are all critical for the sustained success of our mission and realizing the Liberty Theatre's potential as a venue and cultural hub. However, with limited staff and board capacity, attempting to implement them all at once will likely reduce the success potential for any or all initiatives. The focus areas and associated strategies are listed in the implementation timeline based on estimated construction timelines and reopening target, a high-level assessment of additional known time constraints, return on investment, interdependence, and ease of implementation for each.

Within each initiative, there are some action steps that may represent substantial undertakings in and of themselves, and it will be the responsibility of board members, staff, and committees to visit the strategic plan as part of an annual planning and budgeting process, assess progress on each initiative, and evaluate plans and timelines based on available resources. The success metrics for each initiative described in this plan should be considered during the annual planning process and specific goals for those metrics identified to measure progress.

Moving forward, Association leadership should continually review the priorities and timeline in this plan as needs evolve and resources become more available to support expedited implementation and refine accordingly. In addition to reviewing this strategic plan annually, the Association should revisit the strategic plan regularly during implementation to update focus areas and strategic initiatives based on changing realities.



# IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Focus Area	Strategy	Action	2021			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1 - FACILITY RENOVATION	1A. Architectural Design and Renovation	i. Architect Selection				
		ii. Architectural Design Process				
		iii. Construction				
2 - ORGANIZATION AND BOARD GOVERNANCE	2A. Board Development	i. Board Structures				
		ii. Topical Training				
	2B. Staff Development	i. Organizational Structure Development				
		ii. Staffing Up				
3 - RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	3A. Financial and Fundraising Infrastructure	i. Chart of Accounts and Reporting				
		ii. Budgeting				
		iii. Fundraising Technology				
	3B. A Campaign for the Future	i. Campaign Planning				
		ii. Quiet Phase				
		iii. Public Phase				
	3C. Post Re-opening Giving Structure	i. Annual Giving Strategy				
3D. Grants and Public Investment	i. Making Revenue a Focus					
4 - BRANDING AND MARKETING	4A. Branding and Positioning	i. Naming and Positioning				
		ii. Visual Identity System				
	4B. Campaign Marketing	i. Quiet Phase Marketing				
		ii. Public Phase Marketing				
	4C. Marketing the Theatre Program and Fundraising	i. Digital Marketing				
		ii. Traditional Marketing				
		iii. Public Relations				
5 - PROGRAMMING	5A. Cultural Performances and Events	i. Rendezvous Part 2				
		ii. The Liberty Season				
	5B. Interactive Heritage Offering	i. Story Development				
		ii. Exhibit and Tour Programming				
		iii. Heritage Offering Revenues				
	5C. Digital Programming	i. Digital Content Development				
		ii. Digital Content Packaging and Sales				
	5D. Rental Products	i. Rental Product Development				
ii. Rental Product Sales						
6 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS	6A. A Presence in the Community	i. Mission-Aligned Networking				
		ii. Outreach Initiatives				
	6B. Arts and Culture Engagement	i. Cultural Advisory Committee				

Key Phases and Milestones





# STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH

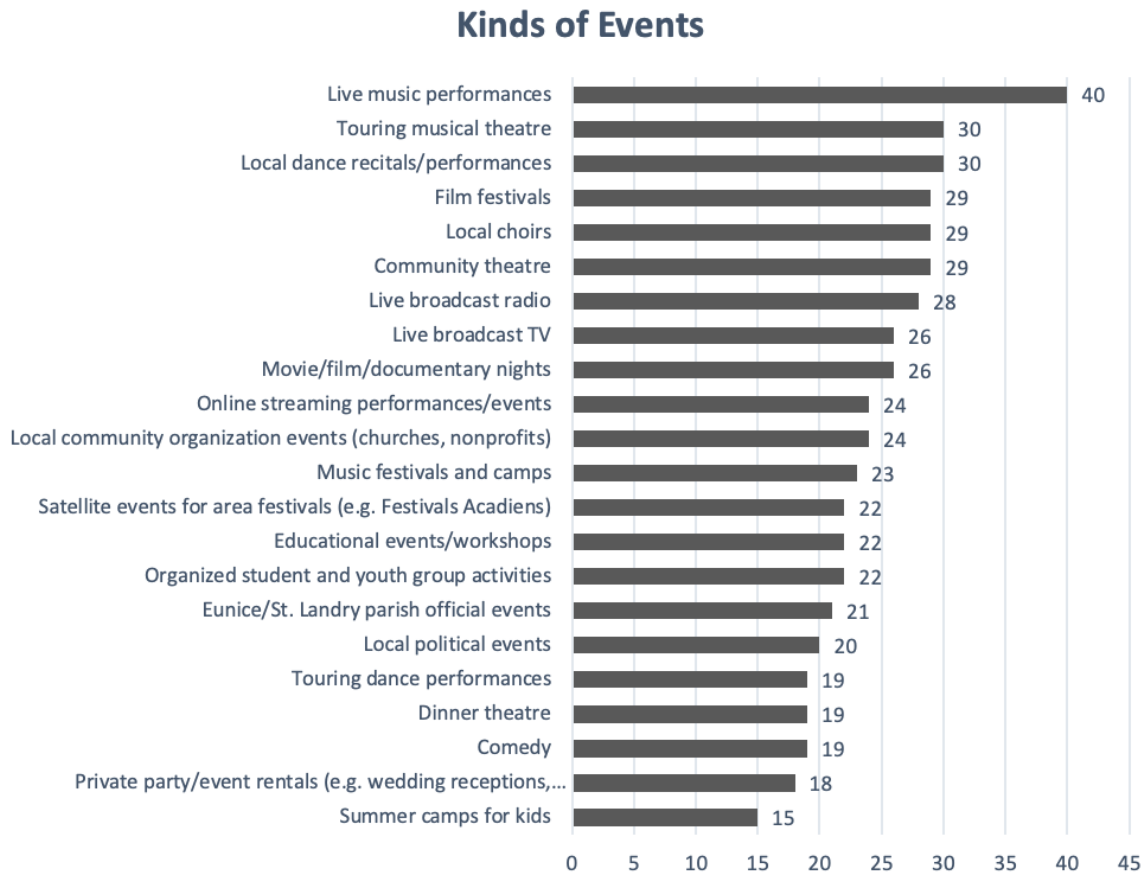




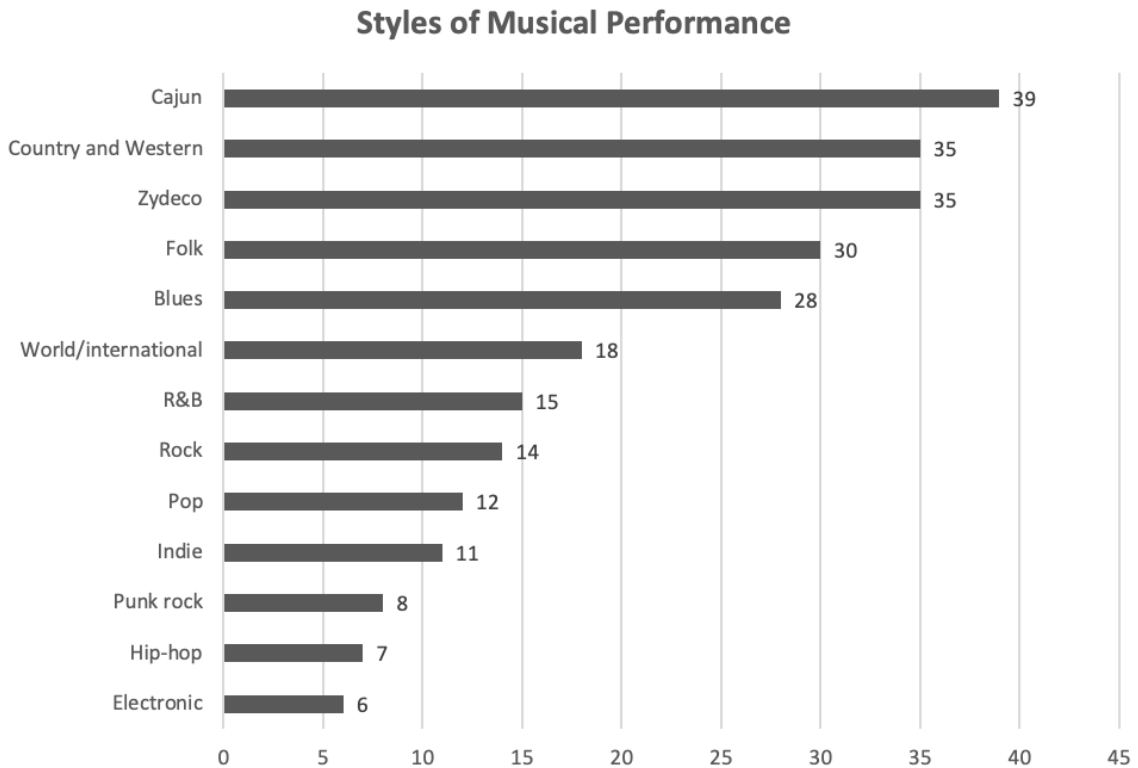
# STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

In October of 2020, 40 stakeholders in the Eunice and Acadiana community and music scene took an online survey to provide input on the strategic planning process being undertaken by the Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice Board of Directors. The following is a selection of highlighted questions and responses from those survey results. A full summary of results has been provided as Attachment A: Liberty Theatre Stakeholder Survey Results.

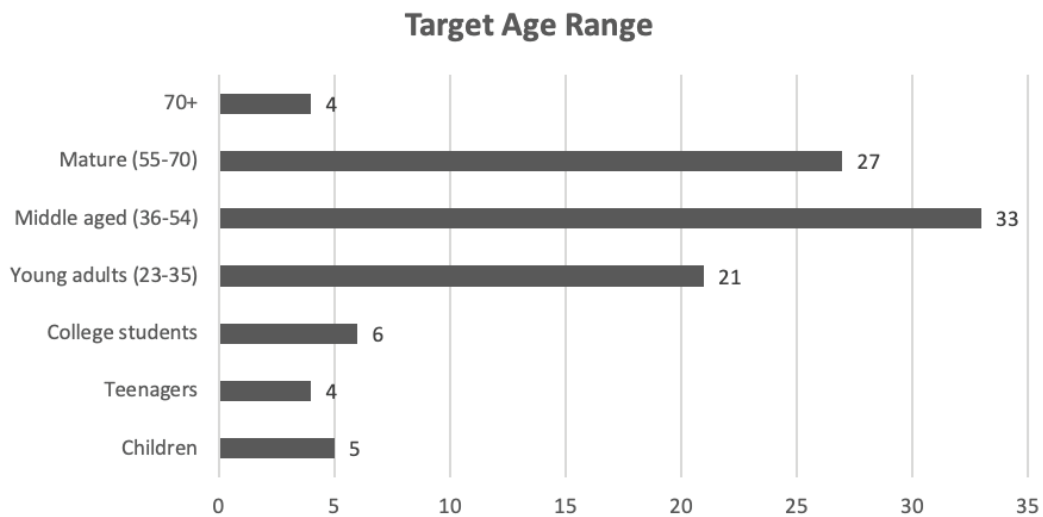
## What kinds of events do you think would be most successful at the Liberty Theatre in the future?



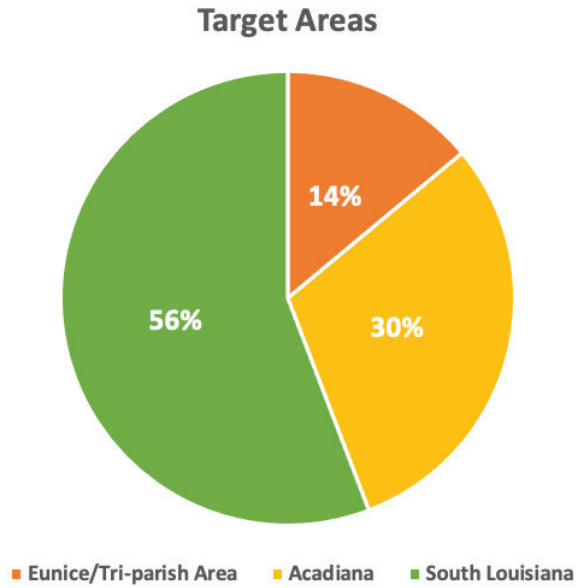
## What styles of musical performances do you believe should come to the Liberty Theatre?



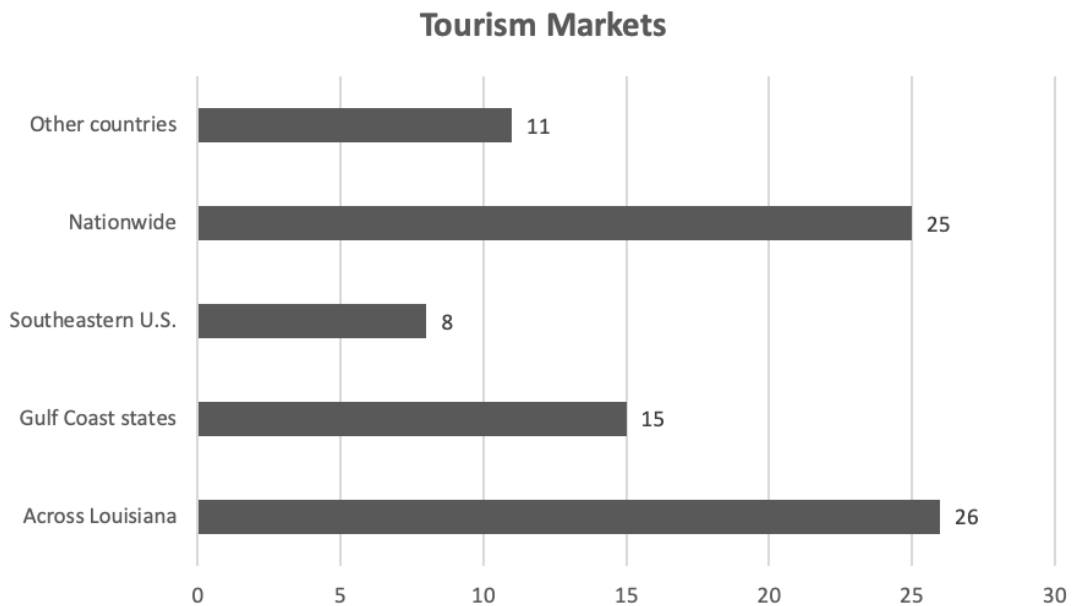
While the Liberty Theatre will work to appeal to all audiences, please select two ages/phases of life you think the theatre should focus on as target audiences.



What local geographic region should the Liberty Theatre focus on as its target area?



While we expect visitors from far and wide, select the two external tourism markets you think Liberty Theatre target audiences will most likely come from.



In one word, describe the feeling you got from attending an event or performance at the Liberty Theatre in its heyday.



In one word, describe the feeling people should get when they visit a renovated and re-opened Liberty Theatre in the future.



## INTERVIEWS

Interviews regarding the theatre generated a wealth of viewpoints and valuable ideas for the future of the venue. In addition to the raw notes captured during the process, the following thematic summaries provide highlights from these discussions that are reflected in the strategic plan.

### MISSION DISCUSSION

Interview participants were asked to help think through the Liberty Theatre's mission by responding to three questions: What impact do we want to have by relaunching the Liberty Theatre? Who benefits from our efforts? How, or by what means do we accomplish our impact goals? The following lists summarize responses to these questions.

#### THE IMPACT WE WANT TO HAVE

- Showcase and promote Cajun and Creole culture of the area
- Revitalize a cultural exchange
- Showcase all of Louisiana
- Improve quality of life and support economic development in Eunice
- Restore a beautiful building to glory and share the experience

#### WHO BENEFITS?

- Performance audiences
- Eunice and Acadiana
- Louisiana
- Visitors from all over the country and the world
- The artists and purveyors of culture
- Young people in need of cultural enrichment

### HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR IMPACT GOALS

- Education and entertainment
- An experience that transports you
- Top-notch content and programming
- Attracting and showcasing excellent talent - local or imported
- In-person and virtual experiences
- Partnerships with festivals and cultural organizations
- Persistent, smart marketing

### STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY

Interviewees generally started with the idea that the theatre facility itself needed significant renovation investment and that any hopes for successful programming would be based on the prerequisite of a theatre that is optimized for great production and a quality audience experience. This was considered to be a table stake. A quality theatre would need to have a functional HVAC system; quality audio/visual equipment for performers, production partners, and audiences; comfortable, functional seating to support a variety of event types; amenities such as food and beverage service; an enjoyable, accommodating experience for performers; and an overall unique and delightful ambiance. Once it is known that those needs will be provided, the Association can get serious about programming, marketing, and fundraising.

## QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Interviewees emphasized that a commitment to quality programming would be a cornerstone of success for the theatre. Quality was defined in a number of ways:

- **Recognizable Acts:** A sufficient number of recognizable and desirable performers should be featured to drive attendance and bring consistent quality of performance.
- **Diversity:** A diversity of cultures and cultural programs should be showcased to be a true cultural asset and to be inclusive of all audiences.
- **Charisma:** Charismatic, engaging hosts/emcees are a staple of the theatre and that tradition should continue as a revived venue brings in new audiences and performances.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The theatre should be a roots music hub for Louisiana roots culture and for visiting cultural performers and an open-minded cultural exchange should be a pillar of programming.
- **Uniqueness:** The experience of coming to the theatre should be enjoyable, memorable, and stand out as completely unique from other venues so that audiences come away feeling transformed and/or enlightened.

## EFFECTIVE PROMOTIONS

Another theme that arose frequently during interviews was the perception that the evident lack of support for the theatre in more recent years was directly related to ineffectiveness in promotions or a lack thereof altogether. Participants emphasized repeatedly the importance of strong marketing and even national and international exposure. A variety of ideas were shared for improving marketing for the venue moving forward:

- **A Younger Audience:** It is clear that many of the patrons of the theatre's previous incarnation are growing older and may be increasingly less capable of providing the backbone of the theatre's attendee base. Interviewees emphasized the need to focus on a younger base – though not to the exclusion of older crowds – in order to bring age diversity and a longer-term loyal audience.

- **Locals + Visitors:** Reflective of results seen in the stakeholder survey, interviewees did not feel it would be enough to focus on attendance and support from local audiences only. For financial sustainability and to deliver on the theatre's identity as a cultural hub, the consensus was that the theatre should promote programming locally, statewide, and to visitors from abroad.
- **Community Understanding:** Whether members of the community are regular theatre goers or not, interviewees felt the entire community should have an understanding of the theatre's role as an important cultural and quality-of-life asset. This kind of understanding must come from intentional outreach and education through earned and paid media, as well as key partnerships.
- **Partnerships:** Interviewees spoke of the strength of existing networks held by the Association's board – from musical and production talent, to political allies, to public agencies, to media outlets, to tourism and community-based organizations – and the imperative to grow and leverage them for maximum success.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of financial sustainability, interviewees opted for an “all-of-the-above” approach to diverse revenue streams, supporting ideas from marketable programming, to active grants pursuit, to event rental, to heritage tours, to food and beverage sales. Some participants also referenced the importance of understanding tax credits and incentives for historical preservation and performing arts that are available in Louisiana. In terms of long-term fundraising, participants highlighted the importance of investing out of the gate in a sufficient technological infrastructure to support a campaign, ongoing membership development, and user-friendly e-commerce solutions for online transactions and content sales



# PEER RESEARCH





# ACADIANA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

With a mission to foster arts and culture throughout Acadiana, the Acadiana Center for the Arts (AcA) is much more than a venue. The organization serves as the arts council for an eight-parish region that includes Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion Parishes. Services of the organization include providing direct support for artists, festivals, and cultural organizations, bringing arts experiences and education into classrooms, advocating and providing resources for artists, and presenting art installations and performances at their facility and throughout the community.



## VENUE AND PROGRAMMING

The AcA facility in Downtown Lafayette includes an intimate 300-seat theater, large museum-quality galleries, and workshop, rehearsal, and office spaces for creative professionals. The organization presents over 100 performances and events annually in two venues—the James Devin Moncus Theater (in the downtown facility) and the Heymann Performing Arts Center—and in site-specific locations and other spaces. The range of performances includes Modern and Classical Dance, Theater, Instrumental and Vocal Recital, Opera, Chamber Music, Jazz, New Music, World Music, Dance, and Storytelling. The venue’s telescopic seating system and height-adjustable panel flooring allows the James Devin Moncus Theater space to be converted to a dance floor or into a jazz club with seating at round tables for relaxed listening. Events and performances are supported by volunteers that help with ushering, taking tickets, beer pouring, and security.

The AcA partners with a number of organizations to build its program, including performance groups, dance schools, social service organizations, public and private schools, universities, and government agencies. By partnering with

these organizations to support their missions, AcA is able to fulfill its own mission while providing programming that is valuable to the Acadiana community.

In addition to its year-round concert programming, the AcA’s premier production is the curated Louisiana Crossroads, styled in the tradition of the “Louisiana Hayride” and featuring various aspects of the state’s rich musical and artistic heritage. Louisiana Crossroads performances provide intimate audience experiences with diverse artists from near and far with each show. The production is oriented around a topic or theme and includes storytelling and cultural enrichment along with musical performances.

The AcA features family-focused and educational performances year-round, introducing younger audiences to the arts. To bring renowned touring acts to Acadiana, the AcA fosters local dance and theater initiatives and participates in the SouthArts Dance Touring Initiative. These efforts bring quality performances, workshops, and audience engagement activities.

Finally, the AcA Silent Seats program works with funding partners to distribute tickets to students who lack access to high-quality performance events.



## REVENUE STRATEGY

The AcA has created a diverse set of revenue sources to help accomplish its mission, including grants, business and family sponsorships, charitable giving, memberships, ticket sales, and concessions. The downtown facility is available to rent for events such as “meetings, conferences, wedding receptions, showcases, and private events of all sizes.”

In 2018, the AcA received \$180,000 in grants from a variety of governmental and nonprofit entities: Al Berard Memorial Music Fund; Capital One; Chamber Music America; Lafayette Consolidated Government; Louisiana Division the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Lafayette Convention And Visitors Commission; Lafayette Economic Development Authority; Lyrasis; Martial F. Billeaud, Sr. Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; and SouthArts. Most if not all of these organizations represent potential grantors for the Liberty Theatre as well.

The AcA’s membership structure allows community members to pay annual fees ranging from \$65 to \$2,000

to support the organization and gain unique perks and exclusive access to events, performances, and organizational resources. Over 500 community members pay tax deductible membership fees to help with operations at the AcA.

One-off giving campaigns for the AcA include the “Raise Your Voice” campaign, which encourages community members to not only support arts in Acadiana through tax deductible financial contributions of any amount, but to connect their giving to a story of how the arts have impacted their own lives. The purpose of the campaign is to build financial resources for the arts and to inspire a conversation and reinforce the importance of the role of the arts in Acadiana.

As an arts council, the AcA also provides resources to dozens of area artists and cultural organizations each year. Grant programs include Decentralized Arts Funding (DAF) Grants, the Lafayette Consolidated Government External Funding Program, ArtSpark Stipends, the L. Hill Bonin, Jr. Memorial Award, and Play it Again, the AcA’s instrument recycling program.



# GRAND OPERA HOUSE OF THE SOUTH

## CROWLEY, LA

Built in 1901 by David E. Lyons, a livery stable owner and deputy sheriff, the Grand, as it was named then, remained open for an initial run of 39 years. Programming included Vaudeville acts and minstrel performances, as well as silent films in the later years and hosted names such as Babe Ruth, Clark Gable, and Madame de Vilchez-Bizzet of the Paris Opera for travelers coming through Crowley often by railroad. The theater then closed and remained largely untouched for 69 years until its renovation and reopening in 2008. The reopening followed the creation of the nonprofit 501(c)3 Grand Opera House of the South, to whom the building was gifted in 2004 by the Gielen family. Grand Opera House is now totally owned and operated by the organization. The mission of the organization is to bring stellar performances to audiences using established, emerging, and local artists.



## VENUE AND PROGRAMMING

In addition to keeping its historical authenticity and beauty, the fully-restored opera house now serves as a fully functioning, state-of-the-art, two-story performing arts venue.

Programming covers Louisiana music showcases including styles such as Cajun, Swamp Pop, and Zydeco, as well as well-known regional artists like Marc Broussard. More interpretive and topical programming mixes visual arts with

performing arts, pays tribute to accomplished and well-known names (e.g. the Carole King Songbook with Susan O. Davis), and features dramatic and comical performances that tell new and familiar stories audiences can relate to. The theater also showcases more spectacular and acrobatic performances.

In addition to single show tickets, packages include the family series, season passes, "Pick 5" packages, and the Grand Showcase Performance package for larger shows.



## REVENUE STRATEGY

The renovation and restoration of the theater cost \$4.5 million and was led by architect Donald J. Breaux. \$1.3 million of that amount was provided by The State of Louisiana's Facility Planning and Control Division. Former State Representative Gil Pinac, former State Senator Fred Hoyt, and Lobbyist Charlie Smith secured the initial funding. State Representatives Jack Montoucet and Dan "Blade" Morrish as well as State Senator Nick Gautreaux were also successful in securing additional funding.

At the national level, former United States Congressman Chris John and Former United States Senator John Breaux helped to secure a \$148,000.00 grant from the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures program.

In addition to seeking corporate and family sponsorships for seasons, series, and specific performances, the Grand Opera House of the South cultivates donations using a tiered giving structure with categories ranging from gifts in the \$25-\$99 range to the \$10,000-\$15,000 range. Donors

can also give at the \$450 level to get a designated plaque placed on a seat in the theater, or "purchase a key" to the theater's Baldwin Grand Piano for \$500. The theater also offers options for planned giving, meaning regular payments at specific increments in time or will-based legacy giving. Volunteer and in-kind contributions provide the theater with non-monetary support to reduce costs. Finally, the theater receives programming and operational support from the administrative arm of the AcA through the Louisiana Division of the Arts.

Located in a 33,000 square foot building, the Grand Opera House of the South offers three venues for rental, including the theater itself. Le Grand Hall is a renovated first-floor space that accommodates up to 710 guests in one continuous area and is equipped with a full bar, a bride's room, an entertainment area, two lobby-style seating areas, and a full kitchen. The Grand Ballroom is a smaller, more intimate event space on the third floor, with capacity for up to 75 people.



# BRISTOL OLD VIC THEATRE

## BRISTOL, UK

The mission of Bristol Old Vic is to “create pioneering twenty-first-century theatre in partnership with the people of our energetic city; inspired by the history and magical design of the most beautiful playhouse in the country.” Built in 1766, the theatre has the unique title of being the oldest continuously working theatre in the English-speaking world. Bristol Old Vic is a member of The Bristol DIY Network: an independent gathering of arts organizations and arts practitioners, large and small, funded (Arts Council, Bristol City Council) and unfunded, all of whom deliver cultural programs within the city of Bristol.



## VENUE AND PROGRAMMING

The historic theatre, which has gone by a number of different names in its more than 250-year history, plays host to a variety of innovative dramatic, artistic, and musical performances for all age groups. The organization has invested over time in building a number of different programmatic offerings to support artists and build culture and pride in the Bristol community.

In September 2018, a 2-year multi-million-pound redevelopment project was completed to transform the front-of-house space into a warm and welcoming public building for the community to enjoy. The new building boasts a Studio Theatre, a bar and kitchen serving from morning through evening via a partnership with British restaurant Pieminster, and a dynamic new interactive heritage offering – opening up the 250-year-old history of the unique building through digital content, exhibitions, projected videos, and augmented reality for visitors to explore at their own pace. A massive projection wall within the café illustrates the story of the theatre at regular showing times, so patrons can be enlightened and learn about heritage while they relax.

The Bristol Old Vic defined these goals for the renovation:

- Greatly enhance their trading operation, with much improved catering facilities and Event Hire spaces
- Present their unique Heritage to wider audiences as part of a major Heritage Lottery Fund partnership



- Include a new studio theatre, accommodating more performances than ever before
- Celebrate and protect their Grade I listed Coopers' Hall, returning its internal configuration to Georgian origins and providing an extensive suite of public spaces used for a multitude of uses
- Remove all barriers – physical or otherwise – to theatre access, for everyone; whilst improving their street-side visibility and creating a familiar, welcoming space for all to enjoy
- Ensure the building exceeds modern standards of environmental sensitivity and sustainability

New space created outside of historical theatre is intentionally contemporary with well-defined transitions from contemporary to historical space:

In addition to theatrical performance and heritage tours, the Bristol Old Vic has a robust digital content offering as detailed in the “At Home” portion of the theatre’s website. Guests can purchase a digital season pass or access seasonal programming, such as their “Christmas on demand” content. Families can download interactive crafts and enjoy family-friendly digital content. Also available through the theatre’s digital offering are virtual historical tours, topical podcasts, and artist workshops and resources.





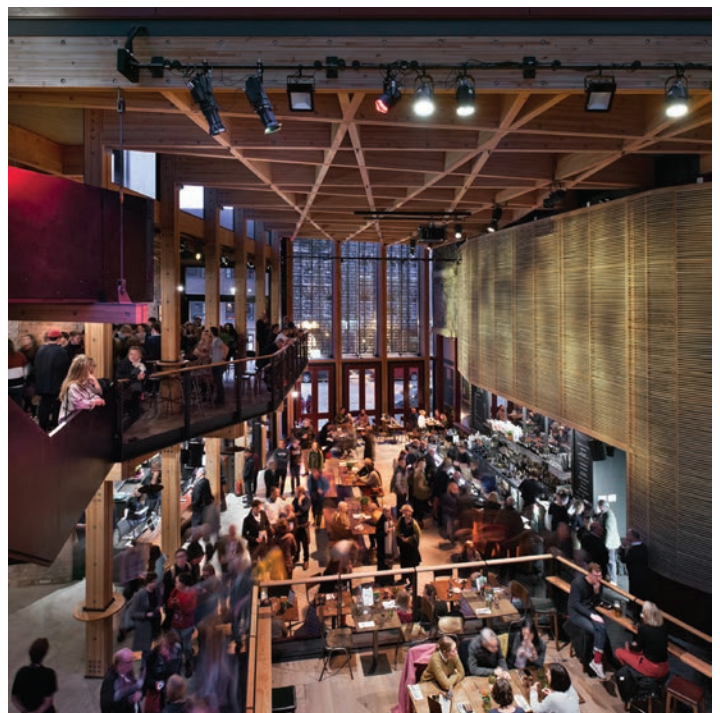
“The south facing street facade has been conceived as a public art work, consisting of moveable sun shading shutters, operated by hand ...the text highlights the importance of the theatre’s long history but looks forward to its role in the current and future life of the whole community.

#### REVENUE STRATEGY

Beyond ticket sales for performances and tours, Bristol Old Vic is publicly funded by Arts Council England and the Bristol City Council, using the investment to support experiment and innovation, and to allow access to programs for people who would not otherwise encounter it or be able to afford it.

The theatre has created a variety of ways to give, including the “Buy a brick” campaign to support restoration efforts, partial or full commissioning of artists to perform in safe spaces as the theatre works to open up post-pandemic, monthly membership fees for different price points and levels of participation, legacy giving, and general donations. The theatre’s giving platform also offers ways to support talent development and education for artists and youth, furthering their mission with a focus on something other than theatre operations.

Bristol Old Vic’s website features additional opportunities for commerce through their Gift Guide, showcasing “At Home” content, 12-month gift vouchers, and the merch shop with CDs, masks, prints, books, patches, and more.



# ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments represent additional diligence conducted in support of this planning process and are available upon request:

- Attachment A: Liberty Theatre Stakeholder Survey Results
- Attachment B: Liberty Theatre Architectural Scope
- Attachment C: Liberty Theatre 2021-25 Plan Implementation Timeline



Natchitoches

Jena

Vidalia

Many

Toledo Bend  
Reservoir

Colfax

Alexandria

Anandale

Marksville

Leesville

Oakdale

Bunkie

LOUISIANA

Ville Platte

Quincy

Eunice

Opelousas

Plaquemine

hur

Lake Jennings

Crowley

Lafayette

Donalds

Charles

New Iberia

Abbeville

Prepared for the Association for  
the Liberty Theatre of Eunice by:

**LAFARGUE**