



1300 Gendy St.
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817.732.3177
Toll Free 866.Our.AACT (687.2228)
Fax 817.732.3178
info@aact.org • www.aact.org

Act Locally, AACT Nationally: Celebrating Stephen Schwartz

March 31, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) is the educational and support organization for the approximate 7000 community theatres located throughout the US. The 1,000,000 volunteers are a vital part of their communities. Like most American citizens our individual members are concerned about the economy. The decline in the stock market has had a significant adverse impact on our theatres' endowments and the investment portfolios of the foundations and agencies that help fund the shows. The uncertainty of continuity of employment and increase of unemployment has reduced individual and business contributions and may in a short while begin to reduce attendance. The projected decline in state and local tax revenue is leading these governments to consider a reduction in their support of the arts. I believe that the major help that the Federal Government could provide during the next two years to our community theatres is to enact an effective stimulant package for the US economy. Continuation of the funding for the arts is important to our members. We also support the growth of arts in the educational system.

Many of the community theatres in the US are small organizations that are managed and staffed by volunteers who are dedicated to acting in shows, making props, sets, costumes, sound and lighting effects and do not need or want to deal with complex reporting standards in their avocations. While reasonable IRS reporting requirements are necessary to protect the integrity of tax exempt organizations, these volunteers should not be required to spend unnecessary time in compliance activities. Both additional regulations and changes in requirements should be held to a minimum. Simplification should be given a priority.

US community theatres have participated in cultural exchanges by inviting foreign theatre companies to perform in the US and traveling overseas to perform shows. AACT promotes these exchanges through sponsoring international festivals in the US and encouraging US companies to apply to foreign festivals. AACT hopes to find foreign exchange opportunities for all twelve of the shows reaching the AACT June 2009 national festival in Tacoma Washington. The next AACT International festival will be in the summer of 2010 in Venice Florida. From time to time foreign theatre companies have had difficulties in obtaining visas to the US. Both assistance in the visa process and funding for US theatres going overseas would be helpful.

AACT members are looking forward to being able to continue to produce shows for your constituents.

Wm P Muchow, President