



City Council Workshop Report Friday, January 31, 2019

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The Sheldon Theatre entertains, educates, and enlightens the community and its visitors through the transformative power of the performing arts.

Accomplishments in 2019:

Sustained revenue growth in all areas - 5th year running.

Operationally, in just 5 years during the tenure of outgoing Executive Director Bonnie Schock, the Sheldon has seen sustained financial growth, nearly doubling total operating revenue from \$663,000 in 2014 to \$1.14 million in 2019; achieving 5 straight years of operating surpluses to establish a healthy operating reserve of roughly \$300,000, increasing individual giving by 203% from \$36,100 to \$109,600; establishing a new corporate sponsor program bringing in \$42,000; securing new and increased funding from the National Endowment for Arts, MSAB, SEMAC, National Dance Project, New England Fdn for Arts, and others; growing rental and concessions revenue by 240% and 560% respectively, and increasing ticket sales by 36% from \$233,000 to \$317,000.

Serving as significant, year-round Red Wing downtown economic driver

Americans for the Arts Economic Impact calculator estimates Sheldon audiences generate over \$950,000 in spending in the local community, beyond the price of their ticket. Different from one day, weekend, or large-scale periodic events, the Sheldon offers sustained activity, year-round, contributing to ongoing vibrancy of the downtown core.

Free Community Education and Outreach

In 2019, 60 events served 3,810 (approx. 1600 adults and 2200 youth). The program focuses on K-12 students, seniors, residents of subsidized housing, incarcerated youth at MN Youth Correctional Facility, and clients of social service agency partners like HOPE Coalition, Goodhue County Hispanic Outreach, and YMCA; who might not otherwise be served by our programs. All activities are free of charge, take place in community locations where participants are comfortable, and are led by professional touring artists - often international artists or artists of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Improving Access for All

Since the 2018 renovation was completed, the Sheldon conducted a full follow-up site survey, and used it to develop a detailed 4 year ADA action plan which identifies steps and timeline for improvements in facilities as well as organizational and programming practice.

Regular financial access strategies include our Kids Play Free program, which provided 539 free youth tickets in 18/19 season, an average of 9% of attendees at the 14 events where the program was offered. We also provide hundreds of free or \$2 and \$5 tickets to social service partners. For two years running the Sheldon has kicked off its season with an Open House Party, with performances by multiple bands, participatory family activities, food and games, all provided free of charge for an average of 950 attendees per year.

Staffing study completed

In late 2019, the organization completed a comprehensive staffing study with support of a consultant, aimed at reorganizing duties to meet the larger operating reality we are now in. This resulted in recommendation for addition of 1.6 FTEs in 2020, and a new organizational chart. The 2020 budget allows for these additions, and hiring is now underway to grow our staff to meet future needs.

SUMMARY

Today, the Sheldon is in the strongest financial and artistic position in its long history, poised to build on recent successes. This is due, in part, to the unique and vibrant public-private partnership which leverages support and enthusiasm for this asset from diverse stakeholders. The result is a Sheldon that is moving confidently into bolder, still more impactful programming that sets it and Red Wing apart as a leader in small-town, Midwest performance presenting.