

December 20, 2010

Dear Mayor Jordan and Chancellor Gearhart,

Thank you for your support of Walton Arts Center's expansion plans and for the long and productive relationship we have enjoyed. We are excited about our recent expansion announcement and want to share with you some additional thoughts as we begin planning for a new 600 seat theater in Fayetteville and 2,200 seat theater in Bentonville.

We have heard some concern that the Walton Arts Center's expansion will shift all the "good" programming to Bentonville. This is simply not true.

Our future expansion plans are designed to create a multi-campus strategy that allows us to put a variety of programs in the most appropriate halls - based on artist appeal, audience demand, and hall schedule. This approach, which is found in other markets, assures that Northwest Arkansas will retain the ability to attract world-class arts and entertainment by having the "right" size hall for both artists and audiences.

With the addition of a 600-seat theater in Fayetteville, the majority of our diverse programming will continue to be presented in Fayetteville. While we cannot predict what shows will be touring over the next 5-10 years, we see programming in Fayetteville that would include Broadway hits similar to *Legally Blonde*, *Young Frankenstein*, and *Spring Awakening* as well as special attractions like Blue Man Group and world-class artists like Momix, Vienna Boys Choir, Branford Marsalis, and Arlo Guthrie. The 2,200 seat venue in Bentonville will help us attract Broadway shows and entertainment that we currently can't accommodate: shows like *The Lion King*, *Wicked*, *Jersey Boys*, *Sesame Street Live* and major headliner artists. In addition, we envision classical, jazz, dance, theater, and contemporary concerts playing in all Walton Arts Center run performance halls throughout the region.

Lastly, as a non-profit organization with a long history of fiscal responsibility, our business model depends on **all** of our theaters operating to their fullest capacity; it simply doesn't make sense for us to pursue a strategy that doesn't achieve this. Our aim will be to fill all our facilities, including the AMP and the large sports arenas at the University of Arkansas, with the best programs to ensure maximum usage and diverse arts and entertainment offerings throughout Northwest Arkansas.

The Walton Arts Center's reach is truly regional, and our success depends on collective regional support.

Our programs are supported by tens of thousands of subscribers, ticket buyers, donors, volunteers, sponsors, and civic leaders from throughout the region. The combination of both ticket sales and donations is critical to maintain the quality arts and education initiatives that Northwest Arkansas residents have come to expect and demand.

The breadth of support for Walton Arts Center is extraordinary, and the leadership of the Walton Family Foundation in support of high quality programming is especially noteworthy for all who live in Northwest Arkansas. This high quality programming is one of the reasons that thousands of ticket buyers and donors from all over our region have collectively invested in the Walton Arts Center. Last year more than 150,000 people attended our events and over 1,100 donors contributed over 45% of our \$8.5M operating budget. In fact, 68% of our audience comes from outside of Fayetteville and over 80% of our donations

do as well. We are grateful that so many people understand that Walton Arts Center would be a very different center without the regional support we enjoy.

Thank you for helping us make Walton Arts Center one of the leading performing arts organizations in the country. We look forward to working with you as we plan for our next stage of growth.

Sincerely yours,

Peter B. Lane
President/CEO