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No sign of opening night jitters, cast and crew all smiles as Lauzon delivers funding news

Backstage, Saturday, June 13, opening night of Stag and Doe at Upper Canada Playhouse, there was no sign of opening night jitters as the cast and crew gathered to meet local MP Guy Lauzon. The start of the show was delayed by about 10 minutes so Lauzon could make a special announcement. Lauzon announced to the capacity crowd that the Federal Government is providing the Upper Canada Playhouse with \$97,500 in funding to support the construction of an extension to the main Upper Canada Playhouse theatre. The main function of the new space will be to provide an on site rehearsal hall. Artistic director Donnie Bowes (at left), stage manager Liz Campbell and assistant stage manager Bradley Dunn (behind Bowes), along with the cast: Perry Mucci, Zach Counsil, Colleen Sutton, Julie Lederer, Jody Osmond, Parris Greaves gathered around local MP Guy Lauzon (front and centre).

Comfort photo

Playhouse opening night the setting for \$97,500 expansion funding announcement

R. Comfort – Leader staff

MORRISBURG – A construction delay has ended up being something very positive for the Upper Canada Playhouse.

Upon losing their rehearsal hall space with the sale of the Eastern Star building in Morrisburg, early this year, Playhouse officials looked at all the options and decided that they would build a new addition to the existing Playhouse to have their own rehearsal hall space on site.

Donnie Bowes, artistic director of Upper Canada Playhouse recently spoke with *The Leader* about the upcoming construction project.

“We had expected to start construction on the rehearsal hall March 1st of this year,” he said. He explained that once the permitting and approval process was completed, the start date had to be pushed back further than originally anticipated.

At that point, it was decided that it was better to wait until fall (September) to start the project. Not only is that a better time for contractors who are already busy this time of year, it would also be outside of the playhouse’s peak season.

With the delay, Bowes decided to check out funding avenues for the construction project, as the playhouse is an important part of the community, both culturally and economically.

That effort was very worthwhile.

At opening night of the first show of the 2015 season at the Upper Canada Playhouse, local MP Guy Lauzon announced that the government will provide \$97,500 for the expansion project.

“It’s a great financial boost, and affirmation that what we have built here at the Upper Canada Playhouse is appreciated, as a cultural attraction,” said Bowes.

“Upper Canada Playhouse takes pride in making a significant cultural and economic impact on our local communities by producing professional live theatre for the past three decades. By investing in the growth of our theatre through the addition of a rehearsal facility, the Department of Canadian Heritage supports the impact we’ve been striving to have in our community,” said Bowes.

“The construction of additional space for artistic performances benefits both the artists and the general public,” said MP Lauzon. “I am pleased that our government supports the Upper Canada Playhouse, a group that gives so much to its community.”

The funding is through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, which supports the improvement, renovation and construction for arts and heritage facilities. It is also designed to increase access for Canadians to performing, visual and media arts.

A 29’x51’ addition is planned for the building. Construction is expected to take 2-3 months. The new addition will impact a portion of the existing mural that adorns the building, with a section being covered by the addition. It will only result in the loss of a few staff parking spaces.

About 10 feet of needed storage space will be added to the building as part of the project.

With the rehearsal hall delay, Bowes has had to find spaces for the actors to rehearse upcoming shows for this season and for the children’s summer camps to take place.

“It has actually provided the playhouse with the opportunity to get out into the community more,” said Bowes.

Their rehearsal hall this year will be at the McIntosh Inn, and summer camps will be taking place at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Morrisburg.

Single application endorsed by South Branch Community Fund Committee

MORRISBURG – Ten applications were received, but only one will be recommended to South Dundas council for approval for funding through the South Branch Community Fund.

The South Branch Community Fund Committee met June 8, to review and consider the applications submitted by the May 29, application deadline.

The 10 person committee comprised of eight Brinston-area residents South Dundas mayor Evonne Delegarde and South Dundas manager of recreation programming Ben McPherson, reviewed the applications to determine, by majority vote, which will be recommended to South Dundas council for final approval at the June 16 regular council meeting.

Because this is the first ever round of applications for this fund that will receive annual allocations from EDP Renewables for a total of 20 years, the committee was very careful to ensure that the applications recommended for funding approval fit closely with the intent of the fund, which is to benefit; public recreational facilities and programs, community gathering facilities, events and related municipal fees, or educational and job training related to sustainability or renewable energy.

In the end, the committee denied most of the applications because the end result was funding being used to upgrade to privately owned facilities or churches or because the information provided in the application did not adequately spell out the end result of the funding request.

The only application the committee agreed to recommend to council for funding was that of the Matilda Pastoral Charge for the men’s pancake breakfast. The event is organized by the Brinston and Hulbert United Churches.

All proceeds of the breakfast, which is held at Matilda Hall, go to support the local vacation bible school. The vacation bible school attracts between 125 and 140 children of all denominations annually. It is held at the Community Christian Reformed in Dixon’s Corners, which also falls within the fund’s boundary.

The group is requesting to offset the cost of renting Matilda Hall.

If council approved the committee’s recommendation, \$59,858.75 is still available in the fund, that will grow by another \$30,000 in early 2016.

Because the first round application process is a learning process for both the committee and the applicants, the committee decided to add another funding deadline to allow for applicants to re-apply or for new applications to come forward. The next deadline for application to the South Branch Community Fund is August 14, 2015.

It was mentioned at the committee meeting that applications for projects regarding improvements on municipally-owned properties, such as the Brinston and Dundela parks, were something that the group had expected to see, but didn’t. Long ago recreation committees existed that would have taken up community projects for this area, but those committees are no longer active.

Service honours flag’s 50th

W. Gibb – Leader staff

IROQUOIS – “I attend many meaningful occasions,” said MP Guy Lauzon, addressing the crowd gathered at Iroquois Point on Sunday, June 14, “but I can’t think of one where I have been more moved or emotional. We are celebrating Canada and 50 years of our proud flag. We live in a wonderful country.”

On February 15, 1965, Canada first raised the red Maple Leaf flag as the new symbol of this nation. In 2015, Canadians are celebrating the 50th anniversary of that flag.

The memorial service held at the Iroquois United Church Cemetery, Iroquois Point, was a special event both of remembrance and of flag recognition that drew a large crowd. – *Continued on page 2*

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