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THE VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION SUPPORTS NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Envisioning enhanced educational programs through the support for the creation of a multi-purpose, multi-venue center for Sarasota

Sarasota FL (May 24, 2018) – The Van Wezel Foundation announced their support today for the creation of a new multi-purpose, multi-venue center in an effort to bring enhanced educational programming, artistic program diversification, economic success, and brand leadership to the City of Sarasota.

Over time, the role of the current Van Wezel has changed dramatically, with a broader mandate and greater demand for services, amenities, and activity, with expanded education initiatives and community activation. To retain cultural vitality within our community, and recognition as Florida's Cultural Coast for the next 50 years, the Foundation believes a new performing arts center is needed and will create public value by making diverse programs accessible to our ever-growing audiences.

"A new multi-venue, multi-use performing arts center will bring expanded possibilities to our community," said Jim Selinski, Chief Operating Officer for Van Wezel Foundation. "Expanded programming will bring more opportunity. A multi-purpose facility will enhance our educational efforts, transforming it into a year-round programming leader. Countless communities across the nation are benefiting from facilities similar to a new performing arts center we need here in Sarasota."

Following an AMS Planning & Research study conducted and presented to the City in February 2016 which reported fundamental deficiencies that are integral to the building's design, the Van Wezel Foundation announced that though the current performing arts hall is successful, it is ultimately unsustainable in its current state.

Research shows that to bring the existing facility up to current standards of customer and operating expectations would require investments of tens of millions of dollars and major reconstruction. Currently, FEMA regulations cap the renovation expense at \$15 million which makes reconstruction impractical.

The AMS study also projected job growth from the creation of a new performing arts center. The Foundation plans to review economic impact and job growth projections a new center will bring to the community.

"The Foundation is working diligently with Van Wezel staff to move forward in the initial phases of bringing a new performing arts center to life," said Jim Travers, Chair of the Foundation's Strategic Planning

Committee. "We are actively in pursuit of a governance model to oversee the management of the new center and look forward to the coming months of planning and design. Great things are in store for our community."

In line with the progress the Sarasota Bayfront Planning Organization is conducting for the 53-acre bayfront, the new performing arts center will enhance the space with a single multi-use hall, a small black box theatre, an expanded event space, an outdoor plaza that will more fully leverage the Sarasota Bayfront location, provide increased opportunities for entertainment and assembly, enhance educational opportunities, and further serve the needs of the community as Florida's Cultural Coast for the next 50 years.

For more information, go to www.vwfoundation.org. For press inquiries, contact Mike Marraccini at 941-914-5324 or at mcm@largeinc.com.

About Van Wezel Foundation

For 30 years, the mission of the Van Wezel Foundation has been to create a world-class performing arts center that enriches the community, supports arts education and inspires young minds. Please visit our website at vwfoundation.org for more information.

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