



La Crosse Performing Arts Center — Get Ready for a Brand New Vision

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GROUNDBREAKING FOR A NEW LA CROSSE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER ANNOUNCED FOR NOV. 16; VITERBO UNIVERSITY TO JOIN THE LA CROSSE COMMUNITY THEATRE TO FORM COLLABORATIVE ALLIANCE IN THE NEW BUILDING

LA CROSSE, Wis. — Leadership from the La Crosse Community Theatre (LCT) and Viterbo University announced they are finalizing a collaborative agreement that will bring both organizations together under one new roof. The building that was going to be a new facility for the La Crosse Community Theatre has taken on a more expansive community purpose, and will now be utilized jointly by the La Crosse Community Theatre and Viterbo University. The new La Crosse Performing Arts Center will now be the home of the La Crosse Community Theatre and Viterbo University. The two organizations announced that the groundbreaking for the new building, to be located on the Mississippi River in downtown La Crosse, will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m.

The building, which was originally planned to be 23,000 square feet, will now be a 30,000 square-foot, three-story facility which will be located at the corner of Front and King Streets. Along with a 450-seat main stage theatre, a 100-seat secondary performance space (Black Box), a costume and scene shop, and a rooftop terrace, the building will now include three classrooms to be utilized by both organizations. With the building and equipment changes to accommodate the collaboration with Viterbo, the campaign goal will go from \$6.7 million to \$9.6 million. According to John Lyche, chair of the New Theatre Oversight Cabinet, both organizations feel confident that based on the successful start to their capital campaign, the time is right to break ground and start to build the shell of the new building. Fundraising will continue until the capital campaign goal has been reached and the building can be completed.

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Today's announcement represents a culmination of separate earlier plans that leaders from the university and community theatre had explored on their own prior to talk of collaboration.

"LCT had announced plans to build a 450-seat performance theatre, and Viterbo's strategic plan called for adding a medium-size performance space to complement its main stage and recital hall by 2015," said Lyche. "As a result of these discussions, we have determined that we share many interests and became sincerely interested in pursuing a collaboration that will benefit both of our organizations as well as the La Crosse Arts community, the downtown core and the greater La Crosse area."

For Viterbo's part, the university is equally excited about the benefits of collaboration. "This is an incredible opportunity which both Viterbo and LCT have called a 'Convergence of Opportunity,'" said Rick Artman, president of Viterbo University. "We need a mid-size theatre space for our students to have more diverse performance opportunities. This collaboration provides an opportunity to establish programs of national distinction in theatre."

As the university's master plan called for a facility similar to what was also planned for LCT, both organizations are able to move forward with construction sooner rather than if done independently. Artman cited the Amie L. Mathy Center as an example of a model for the collaboration. Built in 2005, the facility represents the only partnership of its kind in the nation between a Boys and Girls Club and a university.

"While Viterbo and LCT maintain their separate identities, the opportunity to collaborate was just too enticing to pass up," said David Kilpatrick, executive director of LCT who is working with Viterbo counterparts to finalize a working agreement for the facility. "We are so excited," Kilpatrick said. "Theatre is the art of collaboration. In this case, we partners (LCT and Viterbo) know each other well and have been informally working together for a while. We are looking forward to formalizing an arrangement that will ensure mutual success and sustainability."

Artman indicated that Viterbo's board of trustees strongly supports the benefits of this collaboration. The final approval has been delegated by the board to the executive committee, pending its final review of the financial models and the operating agreement.

The groundbreaking is set for Wednesday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. at the construction site.