



FOR RELEASE June 2, 2021

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Colonial Performing Arts Center announces capital campaign to support expansion and renovation.

*Construction has begun as The Colonial invites the public to help “set the stage”
...for the arts, for a strong local economy, and for the entire community.*

KEENE, NH – The Colonial Performing Arts Center has announced a historic capital campaign in support of their expansion and renovation. This project will allow The Colonial to play a leading role in revitalizing the greater Monadnock Region community post the pandemic.

“We hope and expect that there will be live performances in our beautifully renovated main theatre beginning in the first quarter of 2022,” said Alec Doyle, Executive Director of The Colonial Performing Arts Center. “With both the main theatre and our new, smaller SHOWROOM stage in full operation, The Colonial Performing Arts Center will be able to play a significant role in re-energizing our entire community as we recover from the pandemic.”

The Colonial reports that 70% of the project’s \$12.5 million budget has already been raised through donations and pledges from more than 150 local individuals, families, foundations and businesses.

“So far, the people we’ve spoken with have blessed us with a tremendous amount of support,” said Doyle, “and now as a community we have an opportunity to help set the stage together – not only for the future of arts and culture in our region, but also for a strong and vibrant local economy.”

Two years ago, The Colonial announced plans to transform the 97-year-old live performance and film venue into the world-class Colonial Performing Arts Center, offering expanded opportunities and ADA accessibility for performers, audiences and students. Beginning last spring, the organization took an important step toward its long-term vision by acquiring and renovating a second building, located directly behind the main theater, which now houses SHOWROOM. This smaller, multipurpose venue is tailored for emerging artists, local performers and educational programming. SHOWROOM’s architectural plans were designed by Daniel V. Scully/Architects of Keene.

Now, with architectural plans by another local firm, Weller & Michal Architects, the Keene office of DEW Construction has begun work on The Colonial's main theatre. When complete, the project will include extensive renovations and expansions. The renovated theatre will feature a spacious ticket lobby, a patron lounge and a dedicated concessions area, as well as improvements to restrooms and administrative offices. Plans also call for increased energy efficiency and reliance on renewable energy with all new, high-efficiency heating and air conditioning primary systems and new exterior windows and doors.

Importantly, the project features crucial enhancements to the stage and backstage area. These include a larger stage, new rigging and staging technologies, and creation of an artist green room and contemporary dressing rooms – all of which will help attract world-class performances.

“Our programming has historically been defined by the physical limitations of a theatre which was designed for vaudeville productions and film,” said Doyle. “This project brings the Colonial Performing Arts Center into the 21st century, enabling us to host Broadway touring shows, large music acts, dance companies, and events that require circus-type aerial rigging,” he said.

According to Abigail Abrash Walton, Board Chair, the project is expected to increase The Colonial's total economic impact by more than forty percent, to \$4.5 million per year. “The Colonial is a proven success story in advancing the arts and economic prosperity of our region,” she said. “When our vision is completed in early 2022, our enhanced performing arts center will attract outstanding artists, exceed patrons' expectations and deliver even better arts programming for current and new audiences.”

Tom Minkler, Chair of the Colonial's capital campaign and board Vice Chair, said that the project will be funded primarily through private gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations.

“To date, there has been tremendous response to our long-term plans,” said Minkler. “But we still have a lot of work to do. Now is the time for our entire community to set the stage for the future of the arts in our region by calling or visiting The Colonial's website to donate or pledge.”

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For more information:

<https://thecolonial.org/the-next-act-capital-campaign/>

Named to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places in 2004, The Colonial Theatre is the Monadnock Region's preeminent performing arts venue, and a key component in the economic engine of downtown Keene and the surrounding area. Annually, more than 50,000 patrons enjoy performances ranging from international touring productions and concerts, to niche film screenings, to locally produced performances. The Colonial's Student Matinee Series engages more than 8,000 students and their educators from over 70 area schools to experience a variety of programs and workshops. Local arts organizations and other nonprofits use The Colonial's production resources and rely on the theatre as their performance home and fundraising venue, enhancing the cultural and creative spirit of the Monadnock Region.