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Upstate Historic Performing Arts Centers Unite to Seek Ongoing State Support to Better Serve Upstate Communities

In a remarkable statewide effort, the 13 downtown historic performing arts centers from Jamestown to Poughkeepsie have come together to form Alive Downtowns! This coalition, having met virtually since the start of the pandemic, is seeking an ongoing \$20 million in operating support from the state. Their goal is to encourage New York lawmakers to think of the upstate historic theatres as they do zoos and aquariums and public television statewide - organizations that have great public benefit to the citizens of the state.

Alive Downtowns! members are Bardavon 1896 Opera House (Poughkeepsie), Clemens Center (Elmira), Palace Performing Arts Center (Albany), Proctors Collaborative (Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga), The Reg Lenna Center for the Arts (Jamestown), Rochester Broadway Theatre League's Auditorium Theatre (Rochester), Shea's Performing Arts Center (Buffalo), The Smith Center for the Arts (Geneva), Stanley Theatre (Utica), State Theatre of Ithaca, Syracuse Area Landmark Theatre, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, and Ulster Performing Arts Center (Kingston).

Combined, these facilities have an average age of nearly 100 years and have been keystones to their respective downtowns for all those years. They serve over 5 million

Bardavon 1869 Opera House • Clemens Center Downtown Elmira • Palace Theatre Albany • Proctors Collaborative • Reg Lenna Center For The Arts
RBTl's Auditorium Theater • Shea's Performing Arts Center • Smith Center For The Arts • Stanley Theatre Utica • State Theatre Of Ithaca
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people annually including thousands of students. Their aggregate budgets exceed \$100 million and their economic impacts for major downtowns in upstate conservatively exceed \$350 million.

Upstate New York's historic theaters are essential to our cities continuing attractiveness, urban education opportunities and economic viability.

John Parkhurst, Chief Operating Officer of the Rochester Broadway Theatre League commented, "The COVID-19 shutdown of nearly two years has impacted us greatly as an industry. We are coming back, all of us, but, frankly without this coalition it would have been much harder."

In meeting with local legislators and the Governor's office, the response has been very supportive. The coalition is grateful for that response and hopes to reach all state elected officials to assure an annual appropriation that will allow its members continue to be part of growing upstate downtowns guaranteeing accessibility for all citizens for years to come.

Chris Silva, long time Executive Director of the Bardavon 1896 Opera House in Poughkeepsie added, "This group of performing arts centers are economic, educational and cultural engines in Upstate. We are hoping the state can make a modest investment in us that will pay huge dividends."

Alive Downtowns! is an affiliate corporation to the Upstate Theater Coalition for a Fairgame, established eight years ago in response to the establishment of casinos in the eastern and southern tiers of the state. More information about Alive Downtowns! can be found at: afairgame.net.

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