

The Corporation of the Town of Petrolia

VPP Business Plan

"Celebrating our Heritage, Investing in our Future"

2011 Progress and Activity Report

October 20, 2011

In December 2010 the Petrolia Town Council approved the VPP Business Plan. The Plan is designed to guide VPP administration and staff over five years toward a more successful future.

Within the Plan are the following Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Include upgrades to theatre seating, lighting and sound equipment, and replacement of dimmer racks, and stage curtains in short term plans.
2. Include the construction of a two story building to replace Friendship Hall with a walkway connecting this new building to Victoria Hall in long term plans *subject to provincial and/or federal funding being approved.*
3. Re-establish the revenue base of 70% box office for mainstage summer productions.
4. Establish a "Multi-Layered Programming" model for VPP's Off-Season through several different Performance/Presentation Series in order to offer a variety of entertainment opportunities.
5. Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy prior to 2011 budget deliberations.
6. Upgrade Theatre Manager to facilitate "live" on-line seat selection and ticket sales at an estimated cost of \$17,000.
7. Review volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition program to encourage and increase volunteers.
8. Move to a greater emphasis on developing joint marketing campaigns, and complementary programming with partners, and this should extend to media and production volume purchasing agreements as well as joint distribution agreements.
9. Undertake a fundraising audit/review to:
 - Determine the range of funding opportunities that may exist i.e. major fundraising strategies like foundation support or the sale of naming rights.
 - Determine how staff and volunteer resources may assist.
10. Operate in accordance with policies and procedures as adopted by Council and submit regular Reports to Council.
11. Encourage and seek employee feedback when decisions are being made on program selection and production.
12. Engage outside resources to assist with acquiring government grants for the theatre in 2011. (The cost should be identified as a line item on the VPP operating budget)
13. Set measurable goals with review process fixed.

Nov. 15

15

Progress / Activity

A process has been undertaken and lead by the Director of Performing Arts to address each recommendation. Each recommendation has been assigned a Key Area, Focus, Responsibility (Staff and Advisory or Consulting) and Timeline as it relates to the Plan.

Recommendation # 1

Include upgrades to theatre seating, lighting and sound equipment, and replacement of dimmer racks, and stage curtains in short term plans.

Key Area

Updated Facilities, technology and equipment

Focus

Capital Projects, Grants, (Canadian Heritage, Trillium, etc.)

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

Technical Personnel, Artistic Team, Ad hoc Advisory

Timeline

2011 -2012 planning. 2012 – 2013 Implementation

Progress/Activity

Needs have been assessed and lists of equipment and repairs are being prepared. A Trillium Foundation Grant (\$150,000.00) will be prepared for the March 01, 2012 Deadline. The plan is to have the needed equipment and repairs complete for the 2012 Summer Theatre.

A second point has been added to this recommendation. The new point includes upgrades to the audio/visual equipment in the Theatre to enable the showing of movies.

Recommendation # 2

Include the construction of a two story building to replace Friendship Hall with a walkway connecting this building to Victoria Hall in long term plans subject to provincial and/or Federal funding being approved.

Key Area

Updated facilities, technology and equipment. Future Capacities/Growth

Focus

Capital Projects, Grants (Canadian Heritage, Trillium, etc.) (Infrastructure Grants)

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

Council/Mayor/Administration

Timeline

2011 – 2012 planning/contacts/research. 2012 – 2013-15 Implementation of strategies, grant writing, feasibility studies.

Progress/Activity

Research looking into funding opportunities lead to a meeting on September 13, 2011 with representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage. Todd Scarfone, Senior Cultural Consultant and Valerie Hopper, Regional Manager, Arts Program came to Victoria Hall and met with Richard Poore, Director of Performing Arts to discuss this project as well as other funding opportunities through the Canadian Heritage programs. The meeting and subsequent tour of Victoria Hall provided guidance and encouragement to proceed with the planning process and feasibility work which needs to be completed. Consultation with other government, public and private funders and partners will also be a key component in this project.

Recommendation # 3

Re-establish the revenue base of 70% box office for main stage summer productions.

Key Area

- High Quality entertainment
- Comprehensive and detailed marketing strategy

Focus

Marketing – Experience Economy

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts, Manager of Marketing Fundraising and Special Events, Box Office Coordinator (Day to day and long term operations)

Advisory/Consulting

Artistic Directors

Timeline

2012 Summer Season. Future seasons

Progress/Activity

The Recommendation needs to be reworded to reflect the need to be financially self-sufficient without reference to any particular percentage or dollar figure target. It also reflects the need to invest in Capital and Presenting/Producing reserves. *New Wording: Re-establish the revenue base of box office for main stage summer productions to make the theatre self-sustaining including capital investments.*

The following chart was listed within the Business Plan as targets for the first 5 years:

Five-Year Operating Costs and Revenue Projections

		Revenue	Expenditures	Surplus (Deficit)
2011	53%	\$1,051,680	\$1,051,680	(\$0)
2012	56%	\$1,127,500	\$1,100,620	\$26,880
2013	62%	\$1,301,660	\$1,244,060	\$57,600
2014	66%	\$1,345,780	\$1,259,380	\$86,400
2015	70%	\$1,475,980	\$1,383,620	\$92,360

(There were no Capital reserves defined/identified in this projection.)

Budget 2011

		Revenue	Expenditures	Surplus (Deficit)
2011	62%	\$1,051,680	\$1,051,680	(\$0)
	(32,488 tickets)			

Actual for 2011 (projected)

		Revenue	Expenditures	Surplus (Deficit)
2011	45%	\$ 838,081	\$1,136,415	(\$298,333)
	(23,650 tickets)			

The 2011 Plan had targeted 53% attendance expectations. This was ambitious in light of the 48.5% (26,185 tickets) actual attendance from the year prior (2010). To further challenge the financial picture, the 2011 budget targeted 62% houses for the main summer season and 70% for the "Season Topper" contrary to the Business Plan.

The 2012 Summer Season is budgeted on a revenue stream based on ticket sales of 23,000 seats which is consistent with the past two years. There has also been a reduction of the number of summer performances available from 132 to 82 regular performances and 6 school matinees. Both of these initiatives are designed to respond to the current market as well as provide capacity for growth. David Rogers and David Hogan have been contracted as Co-Artistic Directors for the 2012 season. The season has been announced and is actively being marketed. The show selections are fresh and are a reflection of what the VPP audiences have been indicating in surveys they want to experience. Going forward there is a need to base revenues in direct proportion to the recent past market and keep expenses within that same threshold.

Recommendation # 4

Establish a "Multi-Layered Programming" model for VPP's Off-Season through several different Performance/Presentation Series in order to offer a variety of entertainment opportunities

Key Area

High quality entertainment

Focus

Marketing, Grants, Networking

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts, Manager of Marketing Fundraising and Special Events, Box Office Coordinator (Day to day and long term operations)

Advisory/Consulting

Community Cultural Impresarios, The Ontario Presenters Network-Block booking

Timeline

October 2012 – April 2013 Season. Future Seasons

Progress/Activity

In April of 2011 VPP joined CCI, The Ontario Presenters Network.

The Director of Performing Arts and the Manager of Marketing attended Ontario Contact which is the premier performing arts showcase and tradeshow for Ontario. This is an opportunity to "Shop" for acts/performers suitable for presentation at VPP. It is also an opportunity to network with the other theatres in the province and nationwide to create tours and share best practices.

On September 13, 2011 the Director of Performing Arts met with Valerie Hopper, Regional Manager, Arts Program for the Department of Canadian Heritage. Ms. Hopper encouraged VPP to apply for "Development" grants through the department to assist in developing a Presenting program of touring theatre and young audience programming. The Director will be writing these applications in January 2012.

Recommendation # 5**Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy prior to 2011 budget deliberations****Key Area**

Marketing

Focus

Audience engagement

Staff Responsibility

Manager of Marketing, Fundraising and Special Events, Box Office Coordinator, Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

On October 13, 2011 a meeting was held to discuss: Where do we go from here? Where do we want to be? Where will we be in 5 years?

The following were in attendance: (around the table): Wendy Cornelis (Facilitator), John McCharles (Mayor), Heather Moor (Box Office Coordinator), Laurissa Ellsworth (FOH Coordinator), Liz Welsh (Councillor), Richard Poore (Director of Performing Arts), Mary-Pat Gleeson (Councillor), Mark Moran (Daytripping), David Rogers (Co Artistic Director VPP), Stephanie Lindau (Blackburn Radio), David Hogan (Co-Artistic Director, VPP), Dianne Caryn (CAO), Melissa Mullin (Town of Petrolia, Recorder), David Menzies (Director Community Services), Connie McFadden (Daytripping), Denise Thibeault (Petrolia VBG, VPPAC), Karen Watson (Petrolia Mercantile and Tea)

Timeline

The new Manager of Marketing, Fundraising and Special Events was hired July 2011. The Marketing Plan is being developed and will be implemented for the 2012 season.

Progress/Activity

See the attached report.

Recommendation #8 is being combined with this recommendation and is being worked on in harmony with the overall Marketing Plan.

Recommendation #8 Move to a greater emphasis on developing joint marketing campaigns, and complementary programming with partners, and this should extend to media and production volume purchasing agreements as well as joint distribution agreements.

Recommendation # 6

Upgrade Theatre Manager to facilitate "live" on-line seat selection and ticket sales at an estimated cost of \$17,000.00.

Key Area

Updated Facilities, technology and equipment

Focus

Marketing, sales and day to day and long term operations and efficiencies

Staff Responsibility

Box Office coordinator, Manager of Marketing, Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

ArtsMan Software and Support, I.T.

Timeline

Fall 2011

Progress/Activity

This Project is complete. October 2011 Cost \$16,000.00. Training of all Box Office personnel and theatre management is complete.

Recommendation # 7

Review volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition program to encourage an increase in volunteers.

Key Area

Volunteerism

Focus

Community engagement, Participation

Staff Responsibility

Front of House Manager, Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

Ad hoc advisory committee

Timeline

Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Future ongoing

Progress/Activity

On September 22, 2011 the first Volunteer Recognition night was held. The evening was greatly welcomed and appreciated by the volunteers in attendance. More than 60 volunteers attended. Future work needs to be done to include those volunteers who work to support the many touring artists by providing housing and other support through complimentary billeting. Work is being done to create an inventory of other volunteer opportunities in the theatre.

Recommendation # 8

Move to a greater emphasis on developing joint marketing campaigns, and complementary programming with partners, and this should extend to media and production volume purchasing agreements as well as joint distribution agreements.

Progress/Activity

Recommendation #8 is being combined with Recommendation # 5.

Recommendation # 9

Undertake a fundraising audit/review to:

- Determine the range of funding opportunities that may exist i.e. major fundraising strategies like foundation support or the sale of naming rights.
- Determine how staff and volunteers resources may assist.

Key Area

Sustainable funding, financial sustainability, Capital upgrades

Focus

Operations and Capital funding

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts, Manager of Marketing, Fundraising and Special Events

Advisory/Consulting

Ad hoc Finance committee, Director of Community Services

Timeline

Fall 2011, Spring 2012

Progress/Activity

Funding sources are being investigated by the Director of Performing Arts. A detailed timeline for funding application deadlines is being compiled.

Recommendation # 10

Operate in accordance with the policies and procedures as adopted by Council and submit regular Reports to Council.

Key Area

Accountability, Transparency

Focus

Operations, Short and long term planning

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

C.A.O, Mayor, Council

Timeline

Ongoing

Progress/Activity

Reports are made to Council as needed and in a timely manner. The Director of Performing Arts is in daily communications with the C.A.O. for the Town.

Recommendation # 11

Encourage and seek employee feedback when decisions are being made on program selection and production

Key Area

Planning, Financial responsibility, Marketing

Focus

Collaboration, Participation in the creative process

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts, Artistic Co-Directors

Advisory/Consulting

Manager of Marketing, Fundraising and Special Events, Box Office Coordinator

Timeline

Ongoing

Progress/Activity

Whenever possible and appropriate, feedback is sought prior to making selections for presenting and / or producing.

Recommendation # 12

Engage outside resources to assist with acquiring government grants for the theatre in 2011. (The cost should be identified as a line item on the VPP operating budget)

Key Area

Financial Sustainability, Capital improvement funds

Focus

Short and long term operational and capital planning

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

Ad hoc Finance committee,

Timeline

2012

Progress/Activity

The need for a Technical Audit for the theatre spaces has been identified. A Consultant needs to be secured once a funding source can be identified.

Contacts are being made with potential resources to assist with this recommendation.

Recommendation #13

Set measurable goals with review process fixed.

Key Area

Accountability

Focus

Long and short term planning

Staff Responsibility

Director of Performing Arts

Advisory/Consulting

Manager of Marketing, Fundraising and Special Events, Ad hoc committees

Timeline

Reviewed in the 4th quarter of each year

Progress/Activity

This report is the first review of the 2010 VPP Business Plan

Professional Affiliations

VPP is a Member in the following organizations:

- ✓ Theatre Ontario
- ✓ ASTRO – Association of Summer Theatres 'Round Ontario
- ✓ CCI – Community Cultural Impresarios – The Ontario Presenters Network
- ✓ PACT – Professional Association of Canadian Theatres
- ✓ Tourism Sarnia Lambton – The Director of Performing Arts is currently on the TSL Board of Directors

Recommend joining the Ontario Professional Ticketing Association (OPTA) in 2012

Recommendations 2012

Recommendation # 1

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Recommendation # 2

Include the construction of a two story building to replace Friendship Hall with a walkway connecting this building to Victoria Hall in long term plans subject to provincial and/or Federal funding being approved.

Recommendation # 3

Re-establish the revenue base of box office for main stage summer productions to make the theatre self-sustaining including capital investments.

Recommendation # 4

Establish a "Multi-Layered Programming" model for VPP's Off-Season through several; different Performance/Presentation Series in order to offer a variety of entertainment opportunities

Recommendation # 5

Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy prior to budget deliberations

Move to a greater emphasis on developing joint marketing campaigns, and complementary programming with partners, and this should extend to media and production volume purchasing agreements as well as joint distribution agreements.

Recommendation # 6

Review volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition program to encourage an increase in volunteers.

Recommendation # 7

Undertake a fundraising audit/review to:

- Determine the range of funding opportunities that may exist i.e. major fundraising strategies like foundation support or the sale of naming rights.
- Determine how staff and volunteers resources may assist.

Recommendation # 9

Operate in accordance with the policies and procedures as adopted by Council and submit regular Reports to Council.

Recommendation # 10

Encourage and seek employee feedback when decisions are being made on program selection and production

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Engage outside resources to assist with acquiring government grants for the theatre in 2011. (The cost should be identified as a line item on the VPP operating budget)