



Creating a sense of community doesn't happen overnight. It takes years of dedication, diligence and hard work by many individuals to establish a feeling of belonging and like-mindedness amongst would-be strangers. Every thriving community is made up of many working parts, each one as important as the next.

The value that a healthy arts scene adds to a city is undeniable and, as we examine the very best of old and new in Burlington, we would be remiss not to include the highly anticipated opening of the Performing Arts Centre, right in the heart of the city. As many of the key players in the creation of the Performing Arts Centre will attest to, this is a community project that will offer something to everyone who enters its doors.

"The Performing Arts Centre will provide a gathering place for the community," said Brenda Heatherington, founding Executive Director of the centre. "Everyone will get from it their own experience." Heatherington embarked on her role as Executive Director in May 2010. She was recruited by the Burlington Theatre Board from The Arden Theatre in St. Albert, a bedroom community near Edmonton.

"The Burlington Theatre Board is very pleased to have Brenda as our founding executive director," said Burlington Theatre Board chair Keith Strong. "Brenda brings much vibrancy, experience and community commitment to the Burlington Performing Arts Centre and to the Burlington community."

Heatherington began working for The Arden Theatre in 1992 and served as programming director for 13 years with the Northern Alberta International Children's Festival in St. Albert.

"From my experience in St. Albert, I know what a performing arts centre can bring to a community," she said. "There are always people who will ask 'do we really need this?' But it really is such an amazing addition to the community."

The Burlington Performing Arts Centre (BPAC) is slated for completion in fall 2011 and promises to offer residents an exciting venue not only for performances but for family and seniors programs, meetings, dinners, conferences and small weddings.

"The best part for Burlington residents is that they won't have to drive to Toronto or Hamilton," said Heatherington. "Some of the best performances in the world will perform on this stage."

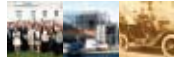
Graham Frampton, Operations and Facility Sales Manager at the BPAC, couldn't agree more.

"We envision a professional series in a world-class space where audiences can come to enjoy live performances they haven't seen in Burlington before," said Frampton. He explains that some 60 community arts groups exist in the community and are looking forward to the opening of the BPAC.



(left) Brenda Heatherington is the founding Executive Director of the Performing Arts Centre.

Burlington Performing Arts Centre



Burlington's Next Act

"It's a very unique venue and we hope to offer a broad spectrum of events," said Frampton.

The centre is being designed by Diamond + Schmitt Architects Inc. and will feature a 730-seat main stage theatre, a 225-seat studio theatre, atrium space and an event patio. It will also include a six-storey fly tower allowing for a wide variety of productions. The studio theatre area will host small-scale theatre performances or dinner theatre for up to 150. In addition, the studio's 2,500 square feet of flat floor space will accommodate rehearsals, small receptions, meetings, recitals, rotating exhibits and can be used as a holding area for large stage productions. With its 5,000 square feet of space, the lobby and mezzanine will be the ideal setting for corporate functions, formal dinners and receptions. The Burlington Performing Arts Centre will be the first in Canada to be built to Leadership in Environmental Design (LEED) principles.

"Due to space and lighting, it is usually difficult for theatres to be LEED certified. They are typically not the most energy efficient," said John Soules, Principal at Diamond + Schmitt Architects Inc. "This one will be."

"The Performing Arts Centre will provide a gathering place for the community."

Brenda Heatherington, Executive Director

There a number of components that go into the construction a LEED certified building, including greater energy efficiency, air quality and sustainability. At the BPAC, recycled slag from Stelco was utilized in the concrete, low VOC windows were used, a heat recovery system was installed and additional insulation was added to reduce the number of 'cold bridges'.

The BPAC has been in the works for more than five years and its fruition can be contributed to a number of generous donors. Local philanthropist Gary DeGroot pledged \$5 million in 2006, with another \$4 million coming from the federal government, \$11 million from the Burlington community and \$20 million from the City of Burlington.

To find out how you can contribute to the BPAC, please visit www.burlingtonpac.ca.

Article By Siobhan Evans



(left) The Burlington Performing Arts Centre fundraising campaign received a \$15,000 donation from a group of Burlington residents. Gerry Puley donated her original painting of the Brant Inn for the new centre.

(above) Mayor Rick Goldring, former Mayor Cam Jackson, Councillor Peter Theom, Councillor Carol D'Amelio, and Councillor Rick Craven at the groundbreaking ceremony for Burlington Performing Arts Centre.

