

**Morris Performing Arts Center
Palais Royale Ballroom
2013 Year End Report**

Morris Performing Arts Center Mission: *It is the mission of the Morris Performing Arts Center to be the premier performing arts center in the region; to provide a cornucopia of diverse events throughout the year fulfilling the needs and wishes of all who might use the facilities; and to be recognized as one of the best theater rental venues in the nation.*

Palais Royale Mission: *It is the mission of the Palais Royale to be a premier banquet/meeting facility, distinguished by its history, ambience, service and exquisite food and beverage. It is the Palais' desire to draw business from South Bend and its surrounding communities as well as outside those areas, thus benefiting both the inhabitants of St. Joseph County and the economies and growth of downtown South Bend.*

Top Morris Achievements for 2013:

Goal - Good Government

- Morris revenue earned was \$893,884 which was an increase compared to \$770,067 in 2012.
- New Morris electronic ticket scanners now allow patrons to enter the theater quicker. Ushers no longer tear and count ticket stubs. The Box Office can now provide show promoters with immediate attendance reports.

Goal – Economic Development

- The total number of tickets issued through the Morris Box Office for a wide variety of 2013 events held at the Morris, Palais Royale, and other South Bend locations was 126,076, which was an increased number compared to 110,561, issued in 2012. The number of Morris events contracted in 2013 was 96.
- The Morris hosted a **record 16 performances of Wicked** May 8-19 and **16 performances of Jersey Boys** November 26 – December 8. The Box Office issued over 36,400 Wicked tickets (maximum available 40,000) with over 19,000 tickets purchased by patrons living outside South Bend/St. Joseph County. Patrons traveled from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. The Economic Impact of the Broadway musical blockbuster on St. Joseph County was estimated at over \$1 million.
- The Morris again **ranked in the Top 100 Worldwide Theatre Venues by Pollstar Magazine**, (based on ticket sales reported to the nation's leading concert industry publication.) Competition is intense to be included on the list as approximately 24 international theaters are included in the list. Pollstar ranking helps attract new events and supports continued business from promoters, agents and artists throughout the USA. The Morris was again recognized in 2013 with the **"Prime Site Award" by Facilities Magazine**, as voted on by over 10,000+ readers of the national publication (booking agents, promoters, talent buyers and special event planners.) The Morris was awarded the **"Certificate of Excellence" by www.tripadvisor.com** which is awarded to businesses that rank in the top 10% worldwide for traveler feedback.
- The Morris was one of three top finalists for the **International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) 2013 "Venue Excellence Award"** for performing arts centers. Applicants must demonstrate how their venue excels in operational excellence, team building/professional development, safety and security, and service to the community.

- **Live filming of Celtic Woman** on April 9 at the Morris will be used on a DVD for PBS television specials to be broadcast in 2014 around the world which will highlight the Morris in South Bend.
- New **Serapid theater orchestra pit automatic link-lift system** was installed which lowers the labor cost for promoters to bring shows to the Morris when the orchestra pit is needed. The Serapid theater pit lift in front of the stage can be lowered to accommodate an orchestra for a show, at audience level to hold 64 seats for patrons to be close to the show, and raised to stage height to extend the stage out further. The theater orchestra pit previously was lowered and raised manually with a four hour minimum union stagehand labor cost of \$500-\$600 to show promoters. The new Serapid pit lift system allows Morris tech staff to lower and raise the pit automatically with a switch and lowers show labor costs for promoters. Also, maintenance can be done by Morris staff so that no annual contract will be needed for outside maintenance. The \$210,880 final total cost of purchase and installation was at no cost to South Bend taxpayers. Funds were raised by the Morris Entertainment, Inc., board of directors and a matching grant of \$100,000 was awarded by the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County.
- **New iPhone and Android Apps developed** for the increasing number of iPhones and Android users to view upcoming Morris events and purchase tickets directly from their devices. This is a patron convenience which assists in the goal of increasing Morris ticket sales and revenue.
- The ***Fridays by the Fountain*** series of outdoor summer concerts, held every year since 2001 in the Jon R. Hunt Plaza to increase downtown South Bend activities, again this year was free and open to the public with generous support of sponsor Beacon Health System. The concert series was co-produced by The Morris with Sunny 101.5 Radio and 16 WNDU TV from June through August on 13 consecutive Fridays –compared to the 6 or 7 concerts held on alternating Fridays in previous years.

Important Initiatives for 2014

- Planning is underway for the ***Fridays by the Fountain*** series of outdoor summer concerts to be held in the Jon R. Hunt Plaza. Beacon Health System has been secured as a sponsor to underwrite the event costs and allow the event to again be held on 13 consecutive Fridays June 7 to August 30.

Top Palais Royale Achievements for 2013:

- The Palais Royale contracted a total number of 66 events. Total revenue earned was \$300,873 from a wide variety of events hosted -- wedding receptions, corporate events, high school and college functions, fundraisers, awards and recognition programs, ballroom dancing, holiday parties and community events.
- The Palais Royale received the “**Best of Weddings**” BOW award for “**Reception & Ceremony Site**” by www.TheKnot.com.
- The Palais Royale was voted “**Best Meeting Site for Larger Groups**” in Greater South Bend/Michiana by readers of Northwest Indiana Quarterly Magazine.
- **Successful community events** held at the Palais Royale which were open to the public included the **Easter Brunch** on Sunday March 31, **Mother’s Day Brunch** on Sunday, May 12; the **Holiday Office Luncheon Party** for businesses to celebrate the season on Wednesday, December 11; and **New Year’s Eve Dinner/Dance Party** on Tuesday, December 31.

Strategic Goals for 2014

- The Morris will build upon our successes and continue to be the premier performing arts center in the region. Even more great events will be booked to present quality events with diverse programming. The Morris will increase the total number of tickets issued and the revenue earned which will bring more people into downtown and increase the economic impact the Morris currently has on downtown South Bend businesses.
- The Palais Royale will be the premier banquet/meeting facility in the region for all events demanding fine service, fine dining and exquisite historical atmosphere. The Palais Royale will strive to increase the positive economic impact on downtown South Bend businesses by booking an increased number of events to generate greater revenue.

Important Initiatives for 2014

- Planning is underway for the Palais Royale to again host a New Year’s Eve Dinner/Dance on Wednesday, December 31, 2014.

