

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA COMMUNITY THEATRE

Media Release

Southeast Alabama Community Theatre Receives Grant Award to Design Satellite Location

Mar. 28, 2025: Southeast Alabama Community Theatre (SEACT) has been awarded a grant of \$56,300 from the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) in support of a new design project for a dedicated facility that will increase mission-driven theatre programming and community access to the arts. The project marks the beginning of a much-anticipated move to build independently operated and purpose-built facilities where the organization can respond more flexibly to community needs.

The grant award will help fund a design contract with Gosselin Architecture in preparation to renovate space purchased by SEACT in 2018, located at **251 S. Foster Street** in downtown Dothan. SEACT's Long-Range Planning Committee imagines the 7,000 square feet to include an education space for classes and workshops, and a 200-seat rehearsal hall that could also function as a secondary performance venue. SEACT expects to activate the space by summer, 2027. The facility may evolve to become a satellite location to a larger performing arts complex associated with Dothan's city center project.

As early as 2017, one of SEACT's strategic priorities was identifying a future location for its operations. SEACT has consistently been the largest and most active tenant at the Cultural Arts Center, requiring the use of multiple shared performance and rehearsal spaces and classrooms.

"SEACT owes much to the City of Dothan and Cultural Arts Center (CAC) for providing an incubator space, allowing us to gain organizational capacity. The CAC gave us an affordable home, and during these 25 years, SEACT has been able to evolve from a hobby organization to one that focuses on community participation and education, and that now offers a diverse set of theatre-related projects and content," said Executive Director Jennifer Doherty.

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SEACT had already expanded its rehearsal space in 2021 with the purchase of 285 S. Foster Street, the former Greyhound bus station. Doherty explains, “Our youth programming exploded between 2017 and 2020. We didn’t want to choose between expanding the season of onstage productions or expanding a youth-oriented education program. Offloading some of this activity to the bus station allowed us to do both, building a dynamic educational program that continues to grow.”

A small group of Dothan citizens launched SEACT in 1974, hosting three community productions per year. In the 2023/2024 season, SEACT offered 11 mainstage and student productions, led 26 educational classes and workshops in acting, choreography, and voice, hosted 11 schools and independent drama groups competing at its TheatreFest, and sponsored student field trips to the National Performing Arts Festival and Alabama Shakespeare Festival. SEACT offers free admission to designated youth and family services organizations, and loans costumes, sets, and prop items to schools and other non-profits.

Between the CAC, the bus station, and other local performance venues, SEACT is active more than 300 days per year. Doherty adds, “On any given day, SEACT is hosting a rehearsal, performance, workshop, festival, community meeting, or after-school class, and frequently two to three activities at a time between the hours of 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekends. We are grateful for this opportunity to keep going and keep growing.”

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Southeast Alabama Community Theatre (SEACT) has a mission to enrich the cultural lives of Wiregrass residents through the presentation of high-quality theatre, to provide creative opportunities to talented individuals to perform on stage and behind the scenes, and to introduce the theatrical experience to school-aged children. SEACT has a 50-year history in the company of thousands of community theatres that involve more participants, present more performances of more productions, and perform for more people than any other performing art in the country. The SEACT season is made possible by generous support from members, sponsors, and personal and

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corporate contributions. To learn more about SEACT, call 334-794-0400, email seact@seact.com, or visit www.seact.com.