

JUNEAU PERFORMING ARTS CENTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction and Methodology	6
Current Performing Arts Activity	7
Introduction.....	7
Level of Performing Arts Activity.....	7
Current Constraints Due to Available Venues.....	8
Current Performing Arts Venues	10
Inventory of Performing Arts Venues.....	10
Possible Impact of a PAC on Current Performing Arts Facilities	10
Recent or Expected Changes to Existing Facilities.....	12
Planned and/or Potential Additional Facilities	12
Case Studies	14
Whitehorse, Yukon Territory	14
Anchorage, Alaska	15
Helena, Montana.....	17
Kodiak, Alaska.....	18
Wenatchee, Washington.....	20
A New Performing Arts Facility: Usage and Size	21
Anticipated Usage by Performing Arts Groups.....	21
Other Criteria in Determining Optimal PAC Size.....	22
Case Studies	25
Optimal Size of Performing Arts Facility	25
Appendix	28
Performing Arts Groups/Organizations Contacted	28
Performing Arts Facilities Contacted	29
Case Study Contacts	29
Survey Instruments (attached).....	29

For over twenty years Juneau artists and audiences alike have been discussing the need for new, improved facilities for the performing arts. This study, commissioned by the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council, is an attempt to identify and quantify this need. The study team conducted a survey of local performing arts groups as well as an inventory of the facilities used by these groups. In addition, five other towns, along with their performing arts centers, are identified as useful case studies in determining the appropriate size and type of venue for Juneau. Following are key findings from the study.

Current Performing Arts Activity

Altogether, events cited by respondents added up to **275 performing days**¹ in 2001, or the 2001-2002 season. The additional days in the performance venue, tallied for each event, totaled **550 preparation/rehearsal days**.² Adding together all of the attendees for all of these events, there was a **total audience of 60,000**. These audience members generated a total of approximately **\$600,000 in ticket revenue**.

Of the 275 performing dates, 190 days were theatrical performances (plays and operas); 70 were concerts; and 15 days were dance performances.

Current Constraints Due to Available Venues

Nearly every arts group contacted agreed that the venues currently available constrained them, on a variety of levels. These constraints include:

- **Scheduling:** The number one problem cited by local performing arts groups is the difficulty in scheduling available facilities – there are simply too many groups vying for too little space.
- **Quality of space:** Much of the venue space currently in use was not designed for performances at all, but for conventions, church services, or meetings. Problems cited included poor acoustics; no space for sets; no space for set storage; small or non-existent stages; poor ventilation; and undesirable seating.
- **Audience capacity:** Too-small seating capacities in local facilities affect the ability of groups to generate revenues, while too-large facilities adversely affect the experience of both the performers and the audience members.
- **Cost:** The larger venues available in Juneau (Centennial Hall and the high school) are often too expensive for local groups that play to smaller audiences. They cannot generate the ticket revenue necessary to pay for such large facilities.
- **Performance:** Performing in inadequate and/or inappropriate venues is often detrimental to the quality of performance. Not being able to rehearse in the performance space also detracts from performing.
- **Inconsistency:** Jumping from venue to venue, as many Juneau groups must do, inhibits a group's ability to build a loyal and trusting audience.

¹ For the purposes of this study, the study team tallied only those events that *may have taken place* in a performing arts center, had there been one (of any size) available. Some groups listed events that did not fall into this category, such as performances at conferences, luncheons, school assemblies, weddings, and events such as Fourth of July parade and the Blessing of the Fleet.

² For example, if a stage production in the Palace Theater had six performances, these would count toward performing days. If they had 25 days of rehearsal in that venue, these would count toward preparation/rehearsal days. This also applies to any set-up time. For example, the Alaska Folkfest sets up in Centennial Hall for a day before performances.

A New Performing Arts Facility: Usage and Size

Indication of Usage by Local Groups

In our survey of local performing arts groups, we asked what their ideal size of venue would be in terms of seating capacity, and how many days per year they would use it. The following table divides their anticipated usage days by audience capacity. Clearly, there is a high level of anticipated usage of a new PAC. However, true usage will depend on many factors, described below.

It is important to note that many groups listed an ideal seating capacity that was much greater than their reported attendance, per event.

Indicated Usage of a New PAC, By Ideal Seating Capacity

Ideal Seating Capacity	Total Number of Usage Days
150-250	253
300-400	180
500-600	15
1000+	118
Total	566

Of the total anticipated usage of 566 days, 415 were theatrical performance/rehearsal days; 105 were concert performance/rehearsal days; and 45 were dance performance/rehearsal days.

Other Criteria in Determining Optimal PAC Size

In addition to the basic “need” as presented above, other critical factors play a role in determining the optimal size of a new Juneau PAC. These include:

- **Funding:** The larger the facility, and the more add-ons involved, the more expensive it will be. How much is Juneau willing to spend on a new PAC? The community will also need to be aware of the cost of operating the facility, not just building it. On average, PAC’s only generate about 60 percent of their own operating budget, and one of our case study theaters generates just 20 percent.³
- **Optimal revenue efficiency:** Detailed operating cost and revenue analysis will be necessary to determine the PAC size that will be the most revenue-efficient for Juneau.
- **Space and usage priorities:** Will the PAC be designed to answer the needs of local or out-of-town performers? These two user groups often have different design, capacity, and revenue needs. Priorities must also be set for add-on facilities, such as rehearsal space, studio space, and gallery space.
- **Location:** The location of a potential PAC will likely affect its usage, as well as community support.
- **Changes to existing inventory:** Several efforts are currently under way to remodel or build new performing arts facilities, and must be taken into account

³ Theatre Facts 2000: A Report on Practices and Performance in the American Nonprofit Theatre, Theatre Communications Group, Inc., www.tcg.org.

in the PAC planning process. These are: refurbishment of the 20th Century Theatre (600 seats); remodel of the Palace Theater (110-150 seats); construction of the Mendenhall Valley high school auditorium (500-600 seats); and remodel of the Juneau-Douglas High School auditorium (1,000 seats).

- **Other users:** The above stated need for a PAC does not take into account potential usage for non-arts related purposes, such as conventions and lectures. There is also the possibility that a new PAC will draw out-of-town acts that would not otherwise visit Juneau because of the current venue limitations.
- **Future demand:** As Juneau's population grows, the demand for a new and/or larger PAC may increase. In addition, a new PAC may in itself generate more interest and participation in performing arts activity, and thus more need for space.
- **Other considerations:** Many PAC's include ancillary facilities: rehearsal space, studio space, gallery space, storage space, etc. According to our survey, these are in short supply in Juneau, and must be considered in the PAC planning process. In addition, several groups contacted expressed the need for a dance hall.

Case Studies

Case studies are a valuable tool in determining the appropriate size and configuration of a new PAC. Please see the chapter *Case Studies* for details on each facility's size, level of usage, funding, budget, and fees.

- **Whitehorse:** With a slightly smaller population than Juneau's (23,000), Whitehorse has had success with their 424-seat theater. The executive director did state, however, that an additional, smaller theater (50+ seats) would be heavily used by the community.
- **Anchorage:** Serving a population base of 260,000 (320,000 including Mat-Su), Anchorage's PAC houses three theaters (2,100, 700, and 340 seats). The largest theater sells out about once a month. Both the booking manager and a Concert Association representative agreed that this is an appropriate size for the community.
- **Helena:** This town shares important characteristics with Juneau: it is a capital city with a population of about 30,000, and it has a large convention center that sometimes doubles as a performing arts facility. Smaller performances, which take place in the 250-seat Myrna Loy Center, often sell out. The executive director believes a larger facility of perhaps 350 would be more appropriate for the community.
- **Kodiak:** Kodiak's school-run facility houses three different stages that can be converted into one. The large auditorium seats 500, while two "pods" hold 125 each. The seating for these pods can be rotated to join the larger auditorium, creating seating for 750. This auditorium successfully serves both the school district and the community of 16,000.
- **Wenatchee:** Having recently opened a 500-seat PAC, Wenatchee (pop. 45,000) may have the most to teach Juneau in terms of funding and community support. As of this report, the facility was still getting off the ground, and experiencing some difficulty in attracting renters.

Taken together, these case studies appear to suggest that a mid-size theater (in the 400 to 600 seat range) would be appropriate for Juneau's population size. The study team recommends that the PAC planning team examine these case studies closely and consider further research into each facilities' design, funding, and community usage. Contact information is included in the Appendix.

Optimal Size of Performing Arts Facility

The most decisive result from our survey of local performing arts groups was that more venue space is definitely needed. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the “optimal” size of a performing arts center for the community based solely on needs as expressed by potential users. As described above, many other factors are important – particularly construction/operating costs and space/usage priorities.

Based purely on a needs perspective, the arts community has expressed need ranging from a small, intimate space of 200 seats to an expansive 2,000-seat theater. How can these needs be reconciled? Following are several possible solutions, and the pros and cons of each.

250 Seats

- Juneau arts groups reported the highest future usage of a smaller-scale venue (250 usage days of a 150 to 250 seat facility).
- A smaller theater is likely to be the most affordable in terms of both construction costs and operating costs.
- This size facility, in addition to the existing high school auditorium (1,000 seats) and the proposed new high school auditorium (500-600 seats), would provide a complementary spectrum of PAC facilities for the community.
- However, local groups would still face a major challenge: the only larger venues available will be owned and operated by the school district, with local groups being forced to schedule around school events.

Note: If the Palace Theater is remodeled, the demand for a new facility this size would decrease somewhat.

500 to 600 Seats

- Although only a few groups listed 500 or 600 seats as their ideal venue size, it would likely get a high level of usage. This is because it can be used by most of the groups seeking a larger facility (1,000+ seats), as well as those seeking the 300 to 400 seat theater.
- In our survey of local arts groups, those listing an ideal size of 1,000 usually reported 400 to 600 audience members per performance.
- The high school will still be available for the events drawing over 600 people – especially if some high school drama activity is moved out to the valley high school auditorium, which will be better suited to youth drama productions.
- There are two important drawbacks to this size of facility. It will be too large for many groups needing a 150 to 250 seat venue; and it will not be large enough for some productions that need higher revenues to survive. Specifically, large out-of-town acts such as Broadway shows may need a minimum number of revenue seats per performance in order to justify their high production costs.

Notes: With the new valley high school auditorium (with 500-600 seats) possibly coming on line by 2005, the demand for an additional venue this size will decrease. However, its location may diminish potential users. In addition, as a school district facility, it may have the same scheduling problems as the current high school auditorium.

The potential 20th Century Theater remodel would also affect demand for the 500-600 seat theater. However, without adequate wing space, the facility may not be able to accommodate drama or dance performances.

800 to 1,000 Seats

- This size of PAC would provide a like-sized alternative to the high school auditorium, which, as the only true PAC of a substantial size in Juneau, is currently in very high demand. It would also provide a more performance-oriented, and thus more desirable, atmosphere than the current high school auditorium.
- A larger-size PAC may attract out-of-town acts to Juneau that currently cannot perform here due to scheduling conflicts and/or design limitations of the high school auditorium.
- One drawback the larger-size alternative is higher construction and operating costs. A larger facility would obviously cost more to build, heat, clean, staff, etc.
- Another drawback is the level of usage. Taking into account all of the data collected from performing arts groups on their attendance levels, this size of facility would not come close to being filled more than a few times a year. Just two non-school productions filled the high school auditorium (1,000 seats) last year, and only a few more fell in the 700-800 range.

Recommendations

- The study team recommends that the PAC planning team begin with a preliminary assessment of costs for the “convertible” type facility, such as that used in Kodiak (theirs is a three-stage facility of 500, 125, and 125 seats that can be converted into a 750 seat theater). Juneau has a need for venue space on various size levels, as described above -- a PAC that answers two or three different size needs at once may be ideal. Preliminary cost assessments should also be conducted for smaller and larger facilities. A range of costs for different size facilities will be required to fully understand the trade-offs between size and cost.
- The PAC planning team should next assess community support and funding options for the proposed PAC.
- As the above cost and funding research tasks are explored, there are other considerations to bear in mind, including local versus non-local use priorities; PAC amenities such as rehearsal, studio, and gallery space; location; and the affect on demand of potential future facilities (such as the Palace Theatre and the 20th Century Theater remodels).
- Finally, a detailed cost assessment should be conducted that addresses both construction and long-term operating costs.

Ultimately, the optimal PAC size will be a balance between size, capital and operating cost, and community support.

Introduction

As the state capital and major cultural center of the state, Juneau has a thriving music and performing arts community. For over twenty years, artists and audiences alike have been discussing the need for new, improved performance facilities. The situation has become more serious as our population has expanded – the number and variety of groups has increased, along with the demand for performances by Outside artists. Exacerbating the situation is the deterioration or outright closure of traditional venues.

Several efforts are afoot to introduce new performing arts space to Juneau, including a Mayor’s Task Force on Performing Arts Facilities; a committee to restore the 20th Century Building and convert it into a performing hall; construction of an outdoor pavilion at University of Alaska Southeast (Noyes Pavilion); and plans for a new high school to be built in the valley (a 500-600 seat theater is proposed). However, it is uncertain exactly what kind and size of facility (or facilities) is needed, or how far these plans will go towards meeting the needs of the community. At the request of the Mayor’s Task Force on Performing Arts Facilities, the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council commissioned the McDowell Group to identify and quantify these needs.

Methodology

The study team conducted two surveys to help identify need for a performing arts center: one of local arts groups and sponsoring organizations, the other of local facilities used by arts groups. The “user group” survey asked respondents to give details about their 2001 performances and events: where they were held, attendance, and rental fees. It asked respondents about how they are currently limited by available space, and the ideal size for their purposes. Finally, it asked how many days they might use such a venue were it available. The survey of facilities asked about the size and type of performing space; the current level of usage; rental fees; and which groups currently use the space.

A total of 38 performing arts groups and sponsoring organizations were contacted, of whom 35 responded to our survey. Twenty-eight facilities were contacted, of whom 24 responded to the survey. The survey instruments can be found in the Appendix.

The study team also identified five other communities (Whitehorse, Yukon Territory; Helena, Montana; Kodiak, Alaska; Anchorage, Alaska; and Wenatchee, Washington) as useful case studies in determining the appropriate size and type of venue for Juneau. All of these towns are home to relatively new performing arts centers, and offer valuable lessons for Juneau.

CURRENT PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITY

Introduction

A total of 38 performing arts-related groups were contacted to assess the need for performing arts space, 35 of whom responded to the survey. These organizations were involved in a variety of performing arts, including drama, dance, opera, choral, orchestral, chamber music, and folk music. Groups were also contacted who sponsored performing arts events, such as the Juneau Peace Officers Association, Juneau Montessori, and the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council. (A complete list can be found in the Appendix.)

The survey asked respondents to provide information on their event schedule in 2001 (or the 2001-2002 season); their audiences; their venues; how they are limited by current performing arts venues; and their ideal performing arts venue, among other questions. Some respondents were interviewed over the telephone, while others faxed or emailed their responses.

Level of Performing Arts Activity

Altogether, events cited by respondents added up to **275 performing days** in 2001, or the 2001-2002 season. The additional days in the performance venue, tallied for each event, totaled **550 preparation/rehearsal days**.⁴ Adding together all of the attendees for all of these events, there was a **total audience of 60,000**. These audience members generated a total of approximately **\$600,000 in ticket revenue**. Of the 275 performing dates, 190 days were theatrical performances (plays and operas); 70 were concerts; and 15 days were dance performances.

Our survey of performing arts groups generated a wide range of data on “performances.” For the purposes of this study, the study team tallied only those events that *may have taken place* in a performing arts center, had there been one (of any size) available. Some groups listed events that did not fall into this category, such as performances at conferences, luncheons, school assemblies, weddings, and events such as Fourth of July parade and the Blessing of the Fleet.

While “participatory” dance groups (such as the Juneau Folk Dancers and the Juneau Contradancers – not performing groups) were contacted for this survey, their results were not tallied along with other performing arts groups. This is because they are not strictly a performing group, nor would they likely use a potential performing arts center (unless an ancillary facility could be used as a dance hall). Any other data generated from participatory dances, such as Folkfest dances and the salsa dance sponsored by Juneau Montessori, were likewise not included in the total tallies. The need expressed in these surveys for a new dance hall is addressed in the section “Other Considerations,” in the chapter “A New Performing Arts Facility: Usage and Size.”

⁴ For example, if a stage production in the Palace Theater had six performances, these would count toward performing days. If they had 25 days of rehearsal in that venue, these would count toward preparation/rehearsal days. This also applies to any set-up time. For example, the Alaska Folkfest sets up in Centennial Hall for a day before performances.

Current Constraints Due to Available Venues

Nearly every arts group surveyed agreed that the current venues available in Juneau constrained them, usually in more ways than one. These limitations affected both their ability to generate revenue and their ability to offer performances.

Scheduling

The most commonly listed constraint to performing arts groups in their venue usage was scheduling. There are simply too many groups vying for too little space. The high school auditorium was cited the most often as being difficult to book. One respondent recalled being “bumped” out of the high school auditorium months after arranging the date due to scheduling conflicts. “If this happens again, we will be out of business,” they wrote. Other spaces, such as Centennial Hall and Northern Light United Church, were also mentioned as being in high demand. Many groups pointed out the dire need for more rehearsal space, in addition to more performance space. A couple of respondents felt that non-profit organizations were given unfair advantage in scheduling desirable venues.

Quality of Space

A constraint faced by many performing arts groups is the lack of any *appropriate* space that suits their specific needs. While there are community halls and churches that serve, they are not designed for performing arts purposes. Problems cited included poor acoustics; no space for sets; no space for set storage; small or non-existent stages; poor ventilation; and undesirable seating. One respondent remarked that transforming a less-than-ideal venue into a workable performance space requires significant additional time. Even spaces such as the JDHS auditorium that were designed for performances were noted to have significant drawbacks – little wing space and inadequate parking, for example.

Audience Capacity

Many groups pointed out the drawbacks of too-large or too-small audience capacities in available venues. Not being able to fill a space is both economically and psychologically challenging for performing groups. Turning away people at the door is likewise frustrating, for audience and performers alike. A “medium-sized” venue was frequently requested in surveys. “We need something that fits in between the high school and the churches,” wrote one respondent.

Cost

Another constraint mentioned by many respondents was cost. Centennial Hall and the high school were most often mentioned as being cost-prohibitive. Smaller productions, especially stage productions, have few alternatives to these venues, but they cannot generate the revenue to pay for them. While churches and community halls are more economical, respondents pointed out, they are not designed for performing arts events.

Performance

The current lack of, and poor quality of, available performing arts space constrains artists on yet another level: performance. A venue that was not designed for the purposes of the artist will clearly not allow them to perform at their potential. One respondent who runs a junior theater expressed how her students are not able to reach their full potential in their current venue. While they typically rehearse and perform in churches, they recently had an opportunity to use the Palace Theater. In this more professional atmosphere, her students performed at their “personal best.” “They worked harder than ever before,” she said. Not being able to rehearse in the venue where you will perform, according to several respondents, can further deter from the quality of your performance.

Inconsistency

One respondent commented on the difficulty of developing a “consistent and trusting” audience when a group is forced to switch venues, use inadequate venues, or offer few performances due to a lack of available venues.

CURRENT PERFORMING ARTS VENUES

Inventory of Performing Arts Venues

The study team contacted 28 facilities used as performing arts space, 24 of which responded to our survey. Facilities were asked to describe their space, to give rental rates, and to tell us the frequency of usage by performing arts groups, among other questions. The study team attempted to contact not only traditional performing spaces such as Centennial Hall, but *any* space in which a performing arts group holds an event for an audience.

All of the facilities that qualified as hosting performing arts events are listed on the following page. The study team has grouped facilities into primary and secondary facilities, according to their level of usage for this purpose.

This inventory clearly demonstrates the lack of local venues that were designed specifically for the performing arts. In fact, only two facilities (JDHS Auditorium and Perseverance Theater) fall into this category. The other facilities are either multi-purpose (McPhetres Hall, Centennial Hall, Back Room) or designed for non-performance purposes (churches, school gymnasiums).

Several venues surveyed were discovered to host only dances or dance classes, rather than performances. These are: Terry Miller Gym, VFW Hall, Cathedral of the Nativity (also known as St. Ann's), and the National Guard Armory.

Besides the facilities listed, there may be additional venues that could host performances. We have included all venues listed by local performing arts organizations in the "user group" survey. Examples of other venues where performances *could* take place are: DIPAC, Filipino Community Hall, and various churches.

Possible Impact of a PAC on Current Performing Arts Facilities

A new PAC may have some effect on a few facilities currently used by the performing arts, but the study team estimates these impacts to be minimal. There are several reasons for this. In the survey, facilities were asked about their dependence on performing arts-related revenue, and very few appear to depend on it in any measurable way. The reason so few facilities depend on this revenue is because they were built, and are largely used, for other purposes: churches, community halls, convention halls, etc. Another reason is the current pent-up demand – many groups simply don't rehearse or perform on the level they would if more space were available. Further, any negative impacts felt by these facilities are likely to be short-term. A new PAC would energize the performing arts community, increasing the overall level of activity, and increasing usage of local space.

Performing Arts Facilities/Venues in Juneau (Currently in Use)

Primary Facilities	Purpose	Capacity
Back Room	Restaurant, cinema, catered event space	100
Centennial Hall	Multi-purpose; used as concert hall, convention center, dance hall	1,200
Chapel by the Lake	Church	280
JDHS Auditorium	Performing arts space for high school, also used by community	1,000
Marine Park	Concerts and public gatherings	200
McPhetres Hall (Holy Trinity)	Church and community event space	175-225
Northern Light United Church	Church	190
Perseverance Theatre	Live performance theater	159
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Church	115
Secondary Facilities	Purpose	Capacity
ANB Hall	Multi-purpose; used as Bingo hall, dance hall, conference hall.	500-800
Assembly Chambers	Meetings	50
Baranof Hotel Treadwell Room	Meeting and reception space	200
Community Schools (gyms)	School gymnasium	N/A
Douglas Community United Methodist Church	Church	150?
Elks Club	Rental space for dances and performances	200
Gold Town Nickelodeon	Cinema	78
Hangar Ballroom	Catered event space	120
Hendrickson Little Theater (UAS)	Classroom	100
Marlintoni's	Bar/nightclub	220
Mike's Place	Restaurant	200
Scottish Rite Temple	Dance studio	60
SOB Atrium	Commons area	N/A
State Museum	Museum	40-50
Tlingit-Haida Community Center	Meeting hall; Native event space	300
Tramway	Movie theater	130
UAS Student Activities Center	Student activities	150

Recent or Expected Changes to Existing Facilities

Juneau Douglas High School Auditorium

The JDHS High School Auditorium will be renovated from June of 2002 until February of 2003, making it unavailable to the high school drama group as well as other local users for nine months. Planned changes include a new roof, seat repair, new paint, new control booth, upgraded stage floor. The restrooms and commons areas will be improved. The Juneau Symphony is attempting to secure funding to purchase a "shell" for the stage, which would improve acoustics.

Palace Theater

The Palace Theater on Franklin Street closed in the fall of 2001 due to disrepair. It had a capacity of 106 (150 with standing room). Its regular tenant was Juneau Douglas Little Theater, which typically did four to six shows every season. It was also occasionally used by the Juneau Lyric Opera and the high school. One survey respondent commented that, "Without the Palace Theatre, the number of shows produced here in Juneau has dwindled. Juneau-Douglas Little Theatre has all but disappeared, the Charter School and J. Althea's performing kids have no 'second stage' for their productions, and the smaller performing arts groups and independent solo artists have no spaces with adequate seating and technical support in which to perform." As of the release of this report, there was some discussion of remodeling the theater, though no decisions had been made.

Planned and/or Potential Additional Facilities

Noyes Pavilion

The University of Alaska Southeast plans to construct an outdoor pavilion on campus called Noyes Pavilion. It will seat 300 and will accommodate drama, music, lectures, classes, seminars, and informal gatherings. The facility will be available to the community as well as the university. The university has secured funding for the project, has hired an architectural firm, and plans to begin construction around summer of 2002. The construction is expected to last five months, with the facility open in the spring of 2003. The facility will have some limitations, and should not be considered as comparable to a new performing arts center: there will be no restrooms, no water, and limited lighting and sound capabilities. Being outdoors, its off-season usage will depend on the hardiness of both performers and audience members.

20th Century Theater Project

A committee has been formed to investigate the feasibility of purchasing and restoring the 20th Century Building located on Front Street in downtown Juneau. Their goals are to remodel the apartments above the theater into multi-income housing, and to convert the theater into a performing facility for the community. Capacity would be approximately 600. As of the publication of this report, the group

was working on a feasibility study; marketing surveys; and cost estimates for restoring both the theater and the apartments. A consultant will be advising the group on theater restoration and fundraising. A feasibility study will be completed by the end of June.

Mendenhall Valley High School Auditorium

At the end of the 2002 legislative session, a bond package was passed that included legislative match funding for a new high school in the Mendenhall Valley. If the bond election in the fall passes, another performing arts venue will be added to Juneau's inventory. The new high school includes plans for a 500 to 600-seat auditorium that will be oriented towards theater and drama, as opposed to concerts. The logic here is that the improved downtown high school auditorium will be more appropriate for musical performances, and does not have many of the amenities desired by theater and dance performers. According to a project planner, it is likely that the high school construction project will go out to bid in early 2003, making the new auditorium ready for use in fall of 2005.

Whitehorse, Yukon Territory

Whitehorse shares important similarities with Juneau: it is a capital city; the economy is primarily government-based, with tourism also playing a role; and it is geographically remote. Although its population is slightly smaller (23,000), it is accessible by road to the rest of the Yukon's population of 7,000 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics). Perhaps most importantly, it opened a new performing arts center in 1992: the Yukon Arts Centre (YAC).

Yukon Arts Centre

Facilities

The YAC has a 424-seat proscenium arch theatre. It also houses a 4,200 square foot art gallery. With a lobby for trade shows and various meeting rooms, the YAC can be used for conferences and conventions. Other amenities include a scene shop, dressing rooms, rehearsal hall, costume room, green room, and bar.

Because of budget restrictions, two planned amenities to the theater did not get built: a production center and a "black box" theater (a smaller presentation space). According to the executive director, not having these elements has adversely affected the center's ability to generate revenue. The smaller theater would have been ideal for local productions with a more modest audience base. Having more studio and class space also would have enabled the theater to have more educational programs, which are essential to secure funding. The YAC representative stressed that "you need education and creation space to raise money...people give money because of a center's service to the community."

Administration

The YAC is owned by the government and governed by a board of directors. The legislature created the Yukon Arts Center Corporation, and sets out terms of management and use. Members of the community nominate board members.

Program

The 2001/2002 season at the YAC includes several dance performances, folk singers, and plays, with about one quarter of events being local. The mix of local versus non-local events in the YAC program changes every year. Most of the events at the YAC, however, are not part of the YAC program; they are local renters. The arts gallery houses rotating exhibitions throughout the year.

Budget

Earned revenues currently account for about one-fifth of the organization's budget. Most of the remainder is raised from the government; local fund-raising accounts for

very little of the budget. The YAC has recently started a separate foundation focused on planned giving.

The budget for the YAC, according to the executive director, “goes up and down like a yo-yo,” depending on the government. “You have to ride the wave of funding without jeopardizing your base programs or core staff. This is why you need a 25-year horizon on your core operations.” He stressed the need to raise money in the PAC-planning stages for operation costs. The YAC “de-constructed” five years after it was built and was forced to start over from scratch, he said, because the funding and management were poorly planned.

Usage and Attendance

For the past four years, the YAC has averaged over 250 booked days per year. In 2000, the YAC hosted over 180 (some non-ticketed) events with a total attendance of 38,842. In an average year, about 25,000 people attend 100 ticketed events at the YAC produced by over 50 organizations and individual artists. Typically 12 to 15 are YAC productions, while the rest are local renters. Most of those events are held in the high-season period of mid-September to mid-April. Many groups are now booking a year in advance. The art gallery holds 10 to 17 exhibitions each year, including national, international, and local shows.

Rental Fees

The YAC has three different rates for renters: a “discounted rate” for Yukon artists and arts-related organizations; a “base rate” for Yukon organizations and companies that are *not* related to the arts; and an “extra-territorial rate” for all other renters. For ticketed events (a 6-hour period), rates range from \$1.50 per occupied seat (\$250 minimum) to 20 percent of gross ticket revenue (\$800 minimum). For non-ticketed events, rates range from \$350 to \$700 per 6-hour period.

Anchorage, Alaska

Anchorage is important to look at because it built a major performing arts facility about ten years ago – the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. This venue allows us to examine a large-scale model with several different theaters of varying sizes. For a point of reference, the Municipality of Anchorage has a population of 260,000, while the Mat-Su Borough adds another 60,000 to the area (2000 Census).

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

Facilities

The largest auditorium is the Atwood Concert Hall with 2,100 seats. It houses symphonic, chamber and popular music presentations as well as dance and Broadway musicals. The Discovery Theatre seats 700, and is designed for opera, dance, film and musical presentations. The Sydney Laurance Theatre seats 340, and is appropriate for theater, film, and chamber music.

According to a Concert Association representative, the 2,100-seat and 700-seat theaters have worked out well for the community and are frequently booked. The larger hall more often houses touring acts, while the Discovery is more often used by

local groups. The 340-seat theater is infrequently used, she said, citing two reasons. The first is design – “it was designed to fit into a certain space,” and the result was not “welcoming.” Another reason is that a newer, high-profile space does not appeal to the smaller or developing local theater groups. “It creates a certain expectation,” she said, and these groups “are not there yet.” Another reason, cited by ACPA’s booking and events manager, is that there are many other, more affordable facilities in Anchorage of a similar size.

When asked whether the 2,100-seat theater is too small for a community of Anchorage’s size, the interviewee stated that a larger space (2,500 to 3,000 seats) would be wonderful to have available, but would only be filled about five times a year. She would have difficulty justifying a larger hall. Currently, the Atwood Hall sells out about once a month – usually for Broadway shows and orchestra concerts.

The Concert Association representative also talked about the great potential of a “convertible” space – one in which balcony and mezzanine levels can be closed off, creating a more intimate space for smaller productions. She thinks this would have worked well for Atwood Hall.

A large drawback to the ACPA, the representative claimed, was the lack of studio and rehearsal space. These were planned, but cost overruns prevented their completion. A multi-purpose space will finally be completed this fall, she said, and will be in great demand – it will be suitable for rehearsals, classes, and receptions. She also pointed out the need for storage space, which was likewise cut from the budget.

Administration

The ACPA is owned by the city, and is managed by non-profit organization with a Board of Directors. The board hires a president, who in turn oversees the staff.

Program

The ACPA houses eight “resident companies.” These are local organizations that fit certain criteria and have preferential booking rights to the theaters. These resident companies include the Anchorage Concert Association, Anchorage Symphony, Anchorage Opera, Anchorage Concert Chorus, Alaska Dance Theater, Whistling Swan (a group sponsoring folk and contemporary music performances), Alaska Junior Theater, and Alaska Festival of Music. The bulk of usage of the ACPA occurs among these resident companies. Many other local and statewide groups use the theater, however, such as Perseverance Theater, the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Sourdough Productions.

Budget

The ACPA booking and events manager estimated that the facility generates about 35 percent of its budget from rentals, and obtains the balance from outside sources. One outside source is the City of Anchorage, which provides \$1.2 million annually for operations.

The Concert Association representative recalled that getting community support – and thus, funding for operations – was challenging for the first few years. There was a marked change, she said, when Phantom of the Opera came to town. 60,000 people came to the performance, and “there was a real change in people’s attitude.” They realized that the facility was drawing events that wouldn’t otherwise have come to

town. She suggested that opening a PAC with an event like this would go far in convincing the public of the facility's value.

An important budget issue to keep in mind, said the interviewee, is the need for upgrading. "These facilities are just like schools" in that respect, she said. She suggested the community should be informed of the need for periodic upgrades in the start-up phase of the facility.

Usage and Attendance

Total attendance for 2000-2001 season was 249,000. During the major performing season of September through May, the ACPA is in almost continual use, particularly the Atwood and Discovery theaters. Few performances are staged in any of the theaters during the off-season (June through August). However, IMAX-type films are shown to visitors throughout the summer. These were presented in the Atwood Hall in 2001, and will be in the Laurence in 2002.

Rental Fees

Rental fees for the three theaters vary according to length of time, day of the week, and non-profit versus commercial status. For a Friday all-day rental (8am-midnight) of the Atwood Concert Hall, non-profit organizations pay \$1,680, and other renters pay \$2,783. For a Friday all-day rental of the Discovery Theatre, non-profits pay \$656 and others pay \$1,118. For a Friday all-day rental of the Sydney Laurence Theatre, non-profits pay \$420 and others pay \$693.

Helena, Montana

As a state capital with a similar population to that of Juneau (about 30,000), Helena provides a valuable case study for performing arts center needs. Currently, there are two major venues available to the public for performing arts productions: the Helena Civic Center and the Myrna Loy Center. (There is also a 1,100 seat middle school auditorium that is often used by the public.) With 1,700 seats, the Civic Center is somewhat comparable to Juneau's Centennial Hall – it is more often a venue for conventions and trade shows than for performances. The Myrna Loy Center (MLC) is built on a much smaller scale, as a potential Juneau PAC might be, and merits closer examination.

Myrna Loy Center

Facilities

The Myrna Loy Center is a historic building originally built in the 1880's and remodeled in 1990. Its larger theater is a 250-seat proscenium arch theater that is a "full stage house" – with rigging, light grids, dressing rooms, and other amenities necessary for stage and dance productions. The MLC also houses a 50-seat screening room and a small art gallery that adjoins the box office. It recently completed a "media lab," which houses video creation and editing, DVD creation, and other arts-related software equipment.

Administration

A Board of Directors oversees the staff-run facility.

Program

The MLC's mission is to: "present the arts, including media, performing, literary and visual, in an educational context, with challenging and culturally enriching programs that would not otherwise appear in the Helena area or in Montana." For the 2001-2002 season, the larger theater's program included films, musicals, plays, children's concerts, a jazz trio, a chamber music quartet, folk music performers, a classical guitarist, and a storyteller. In an interview, an MLC representative guessed that about half of the performing arts events are by local groups, the other half by touring performers. Tickets range from \$10 to \$30.

In its 50-seat screening room, the MLC shows films daily, usually "mainstream, independent" films. The gallery hosts rotating exhibitions year-round.

Budget

About 60 percent of the MLC's budget comes from earned income, while the rest relies on fund-raising and grants. The MLC representative guessed that had the theater been just 100 seats larger, the center would be more self-sustaining, since shows often sell out.

Usage and Attendance

In 2000, films attracted over 17,000 patrons to the MLC. In addition, the MLC hosted 19 live performance events in the 2001-2002 season. A representative says that both theaters are used almost every day.

Even with the Stanley Civic Center, the Myrna Loy Center, the middle school auditorium, and auditoriums at both high schools, the MLC representative believed that another venue was necessary to fully meet Helena's needs. While the MLC is ideal as an intimate theater, he said, a 500 to 600-seat theater would be heavily utilized.

Rental Fees

The larger theater rents for \$125 per half day, \$200 all day, and \$400 per evening. The 50-seat screening room rents for \$50 per half day and \$75 per full day. Evenings are not available due to film screenings. The MLC also rents its gallery/lobby for \$75 per half day, \$125 per whole day, and \$175 per evening.

Kodiak, Alaska

Kodiak Island is quite a bit smaller than Juneau in population size, at 14,000 (6,000 in the city of Kodiak), so its theater-going audience is clearly more limited. However, this community is home to a rich performing arts community, as well as a uniquely-designed performing arts center. Built in 1986, this theater houses three stages that can be converted into one, depending on the needs of the performer, and the size of the audience.

Gerald C. Wilson Auditorium

Facilities

The main auditorium has a capacity of 500. There are two additional “pods:” a drama pod with raked seating for 125 and a small stage, and a choral pod with raked seating for 125 and no stage. Both pods can be used autonomously or the seating can be revolved around to join the main auditorium, creating capacity for 750. There is a shop for set construction downstairs in the facility, and a freight elevator. Other amenities include a green room, band room, rehearsal room, and dance studio.

Administration

The Wilson Auditorium belongs to the school district and is administered by the community schools program. While school performances get priority, scheduling of the facility takes community needs into account.

Program

Most school performances take place in the Wilson Auditorium. In addition, the Kodiak Arts Council presented all of their events there in the 2001-2002 season. These included an African drumming group, a swing band, a play, a dance performance, a string quartet, a musical, and a ballet. Three of the eight events were locally produced. The center is also rented by local clubs and organizations for fundraisers, meetings, conferences, and performances.

Budget

According to the facility’s manager, the community use mostly pays for itself, not counting maintenance costs. The school district pays for all costs not covered by rental revenue.

Usage and Attendance

The Wilson Auditorium is in use almost every day, between school and community performances and rehearsals. In the summer, the school district’s fine arts program uses the space. The Kodiak Arts Council presented eight programs at the Wilson Auditorium in the 2001-2002 season, with a total of 17 performing days. An arts council representative said that it is best to book the auditorium a year in advance because of its high demand.

Rental Fees

Since the theater is run by the school district, school groups use the space for free. Governmental groups also use the space for free. Three more categories of users are charged different rates: non-profit, non-partisan; non-profit, partisan; and commercial. Rates range from \$72/hour to \$216/hour for the main auditorium, to \$115/hour to \$345/hour for the main auditorium plus two pods. Rentals can be arranged for each of the individual rooms attached to the auditorium: drama pod, choral pod, dance studio, band room, green room, and commons.

Wenatchee, Washington

While Wenatchee's recently built PAC is so new that it is difficult to fully profile, it will be a valuable example to keep in mind as the Juneau PAC is being planned. Wenatchee has a population of 45,000 within the city limits; their PAC's target area includes about 100,000 residents. Some details about the center follow.

Bank of America Performing Arts Center

Facilities

Built in October of 2000, the Bank of America PAC has an audience capacity of 496 permanent seats, 605 with added seats. It has a standard proscenium stage, with some wing space. There are dressing rooms but no rehearsal room. The \$7.5 million facility was funded in a variety of ways, including grants, municipal funding, and community contributions.

Administration

A board of directors oversees the facility.

Program

The Bank of America PAC is still developing its program, and has just gotten running in the last year. Their 2002-2003 program will include touring theater, musicals, and concerts. The administration would like to have a mix of local and non-local renters, with the majority (70-80 percent) being touring acts. A representative explained that the out-of-town acts are much more able to afford the facility rental fees.

Budget

It is expected that this PAC will not be self sustaining, commented a representative. In general, he said, PAC's like this need between 40 and 60 percent of their budget to be supplied through outside means. The director of the facility explained that when raising funds for a facility like this, you need to raise a dollar for operation fees for every dollar raised for construction. His view was that his PAC would be much better equipped for operation had this happened. A proposed facility in Port Townsend, Washington, is using this approach, he said.

Usage and Attendance

The PAC is being used more and more frequently as the community recognizes its uses and value. Earlier in the year it was only used twice a month, while next month it will be rented on seven days. The goal is to have the facility rented four to five days a week.

Rental Fees

The facility costs \$800/day plus labor, although they have had to negotiate and rent to local groups for less (\$400/day, in some cases). The goal is to bring in \$5,000 every week from rentals, \$20,000/month.

A NEW PERFORMING ARTS FACILITY: USAGE AND SIZE

Anticipated Usage by Performing Arts Groups

Most local performing arts groups indicate that they would use a new performing arts facility at least once a year. However, they were asked about their *ideal* PAC – one that suits their group in terms of seating capacity. Therefore we have divided anticipated usage days by audience capacity.

It can be assumed that those groups desiring a larger facility will use a smaller facility and vice versa, if no other venue is available. It is also important to note that most groups will want to present on weekends – the “total number of usage days” should be considered with this in mind.

It is important to note that many groups listed an ideal seating capacity that was much greater than their reported attendance, per event. While it is true that a new PAC will likely draw larger audiences, the increase would be incremental, not exponential.

Clearly, there is a high level of anticipated usage of a new PAC. However, true usage will depend on many factors, described in the next section.

Anticipated Usage of a PAC, By Ideal Seating Capacity

Ideal Seating Capacity	Total Number of Usage Days
150-250	253
300-400	150
500-600	15
1000+	118
Total	566

Of the total anticipated usage of 566 days, 415 were theatrical performance/rehearsal days; 105 were concert performance/rehearsal days; and 45 were dance performance/rehearsal days.

Other Criteria in Determining Optimal PAC Size

In addition to the basic “need” as presented above, other critical factors play a role in determining the optimal size of a new Juneau PAC. These include:

- Funding
- Optimal revenue efficiency
- Space and usage priorities
- Location
- Changes to existing inventory
- Other users
- Future demand
- Other considerations

Funding

The design of a new PAC will not depend solely on current need or projected usage – it will depend on available funding. The larger the facility, and the more “bells and whistles” involved, the more expensive it will be. At what point will the community decide that the benefits are not worth the cost? This must be determined as part of the PAC planning process. The community will also need to be aware of the cost of operating the facility, not just building it. In general, PAC’s do not pay for themselves – on average, 40 percent of their budget comes from outside sources. This kind of endeavor will require a long-term commitment from the community.

Optimal Revenue Efficiency

An important question that cannot yet be answered concerns optimal revenue efficiency. That is, what size facility will require the least subsidy (operating expenditures less operating revenues) and still meet the basic needs of the performing arts community. A very large, versatile facility could meet all those needs, but likely require a larger subsidy than a smaller facility that may not meet all those needs but would be less expensive to operate. Detailed operating cost and revenue analysis – beyond the scope of this needs assessment – is required to answer this question.

Space and Usage Priorities

Priorities for the PAC must be discussed and agreed upon, especially those concerning local versus non-local use. Will the PAC be designed to answer the needs of local performers or out-of-town performers? These two user groups often have different design, capacity, and revenue needs. Further, if ancillary facilities are to be included, priorities must be set for these: rehearsal space, studio space, gallery space, storage space, etc.

Location

Location will be another factor to consider in the feasibility of a performing arts center. If it were built near Centennial Hall, for example, it could be used in conjunction with conventions or performing events like the Alaska Folk Festival. On the other hand, a valley location may draw greater audiences due to the proximity to more residents. Parking capacity will also affect usage. Many survey respondents pointed out that the current parking situation at local venues deters some people from attending.

Changes to Existing Inventory

Several efforts are currently under way to remodel or build new performing arts facilities. These are: refurbishment of the 20th Century Theatre (600 seats); remodel of the Palace Theater (110-150 seats); construction of the Mendenhall Valley high school auditorium (500-600 seats); and remodel of the Juneau-Douglas High School auditorium (1,000 seats). The only definite plan among these is the remodel of the JDHS auditorium; however, this will only improve the existing facility, it will not add capacity or decrease demand. If any of the other plans go through, it will affect the demand and expected usage for a new PAC, depending on the capacity and rental cost.

Other Users

Additional Users

Three out of the 38 organizations contacted did not respond to our “user group” survey. Two of these groups are not likely users of a PAC due to the nature of their performances. The third group may use the facility, but the study team estimates the usage would be low (a few days a year). Further, local groups not contacted in our survey may rent the PAC for non-arts-related purposes, such as lectures sponsored by the Juneau World Affairs Council. It is beyond the scope of this study to estimate the potential usage of a PAC from these factors.

There is the possibility that a new PAC will draw out-of-town acts that would not otherwise visit Juneau because of the current venue limitations.

Visitor Market

While this study primarily addresses potential usage by *local residents* of a performing arts center, visitors represent a further potential market. A performing arts center located near Centennial Hall, for example, could be rented for conventions in conjunction with that facility. Larger conventions usually need separate venues for their general sessions, break-out sessions, meals, and trade shows. Currently, Juneau has difficulty attracting conventions with more than a few hundred attendees because Centennial Hall has only so much space. The off-site facilities currently used for trade shows are often inadequate due to size, location, or atmosphere. A conveniently-located PAC could host general sessions and even trade shows, depending on the configuration of the facility. A Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau representative stated that a new PAC, perhaps in the 500 to 600-seat range, would be a “definite advantage” in drawing more conventions to Juneau. However, she said, its design and location would have to be compatible with convention needs.

There is also the possibility that a performing arts center could host presentations for summer visitors – Native dance groups, for example. One survey respondent discussed the possibilities of showcasing Native culture to visitors in this type of venue. Sitka’s Russian Dancers have clearly had success in this market.

Future Demand

This study provides a snapshot of *current* performing arts activity and *current* venue needs. These may change as our population shifts, or local interests change. The Alaska Department of Labor has projected Juneau’s population to be between 32,000 and 34,000 in 2008, up from the 2000 Census estimate of 30,700. Not counting population increase, perhaps the addition of a performing arts center will generate more interest and participation in the arts, increasing demand for facilities. It is beyond the scope of this study to predict future demand for a performing arts center from these factors, but it should be considered in the PAC planning process.

Other Considerations

Ancillary Facilities

Many PAC’s include space for rehearsals, classes, and studio work. Local rehearsal space is currently at a premium, according to some survey respondents. Including rehearsal space in a new PAC may pay off in rental revenue. Classroom and studio space are also considerations. According to one Outside PAC executive, these kinds of spaces are essential to win community support, particularly since they can accommodate children and families.

Another consideration is gallery space. Two of the four case study PAC’s (see next chapter) have gallery space as a part of their facility. Several survey respondents mentioned this as a community need.

Dance Venue

It should also be mentioned that several respondents were interested in seeing a new dance hall constructed. Suggested capacities ranged from 50 to 500. Regular users might include the Contradancers, the Juneau Folk Dancers, and youth dance schools. Other organizations that sponsor occasional fundraising events, such as Juneau Montessori and UAS, are also potential users.

Quality of Life

One aspect of a performing arts center that is difficult to quantify is its effects on quality of life. A new performing arts facility in Juneau would undoubtedly have a positive effect on many people’s quality of life – performers and audiences alike. It has the potential to bring acts to Juneau that would otherwise not come, to allow groups to perform in a real theater for the first time, and to provide space for classes that would otherwise not be offered. According to one case study contact in Whitehorse, the local performing arts center and accompanying artistic activity helps people want to move to Whitehorse, and stay there longer.

Case Studies

Case studies are a valuable tool in determining the appropriate size and configuration of a new PAC (see previous chapter, Case Studies).

Anchorage's PAC houses three theaters, with the largest seating 2,100. Both the booking manager and the Concert Association representative agreed that this was an appropriate size for the community – a city of 260,000, with another 60,000 close-by in Mat-Su. Looking at Juneau's population, one-tenth the size of Anchorage's, it is clear that a theater of this size would be too large.

Whitehorse houses a much smaller facility than Anchorage: the Yukon Arts Centre, with one 424-seat theater. With a slightly smaller population than Juneau's (23,000), Whitehorse has had success with this size of theater. The executive director did state, however, that an additional, smaller theater (50+ seats) would be heavily used by the community.

Kodiak's facility is particularly relevant to Juneau, because it houses three different stages that can be converted into one. (Juneau has a strong need for both smaller and larger capacity venues.) The large auditorium seats 500, while two "pods" (called the drama pod and the choral pod) hold 125 each. The seating for these pods can be rotated to join the larger auditorium, creating seating for 750.

Wenatchee may have the most to teach Juneau in regards to funding, having recently completed their PAC and learned some valuable lessons. But it is important to note that this community of 45,000 (the PAC has a target area of 100,000), a 500-seat theater is currently having difficulty getting renters. Prior to this theater being built, Wenatchee had much the same problems as Juneau with regard to available facilities: most community performances took place in high school auditoriums, and were subject to the school district for scheduling.

Helena has the most in common with Juneau, perhaps: it is a capital city with a population of about 30,000, and it has a large convention center that sometimes doubles as a performing arts facility. Smaller performances take place in the 250-seat Myrna Loy Center. This facility is heavily used by the community, and many performances sell out. The executive director believes a larger facility of perhaps 350 would be more appropriate for the community.

Taken together, these case studies appear to suggest that a mid-size theater (in the 400 to 600 seat range) would be appropriate for Juneau's population size. The study team recommends that the PAC planning team examine these case studies closely and consider further research into each facilities' design, funding, and community usage. Contact information is included in the Appendix.

Optimal Size of Performing Arts Facility

The most decisive result from our survey of local performing arts groups was that more venue space is definitely needed. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the "optimal" size of a performing arts center for the community based solely on needs as expressed by potential users. As described above, many other factors are important – particularly construction/operating costs and space/usage priorities.

In this discussion it is important to keep in mind the somewhat ambiguous nature of "need." Need is not necessarily the same as demand. The need measured in this

study does not consider the price sensitivity of potential PAC users. Actual demand for and use of a new PAC would depend on the cost of facility rental, scheduling conflicts (with highest demand for weekend dates), the kinds of ancillary facilities available with the auditorium, and to a degree, the location of the facility. Rental cost is an especially important issue. As such, the potential usage measured in this study should be considered pre-feasibility level estimates only. Once operating cost and conceptual design information is available, more detailed usage and revenue estimates can be made. Nevertheless, the information gathered in the user's survey provides some guidance in this initial assessment of the optimal PAC size.

Based purely on a needs perspective, the arts community has expressed need ranging from a small, intimate space of 200 seats to an expansive 2,000-seat theater. How can these needs be reconciled? Following are several possible solutions, and the pros and cons of each.

250 Seats

Juneau arts groups reported the highest future usage of a 150 to 250 seat facility – 250 usage days out of 516 total. If the community decided to go with a smaller facility, the study team would recommend a 250-seat theater to accommodate the greatest number of groups. The number of potential usage days could grow, depending on the flexibility of users (many groups listed slightly larger or slightly smaller sizes as ideal). A smaller theater is also likely to be the most affordable in terms of both construction costs and operating costs.

This size facility, in addition to the existing high school auditorium (1,000 seats) and the proposed new high school auditorium (500-600 seats), would provide a complementary spectrum of PAC facilities for the community (see below for a discussion of a 1,500+ seat facility). However, local groups would still face a major challenge: the only larger venues available will be owned and operated by the school district, with local groups being forced to schedule around school events.

Note: If the Palace Theater is remodeled, the demand for a new facility this size would decrease somewhat.

500 to 600 Seats

Although only a few groups listed 500 or 600 seats as their ideal venue size, it would likely get a high level of usage. This is because it can be used by most of the groups seeking a larger facility (1,000+ seats), as well as those seeking the 300 to 400 seat theater. In our survey of local arts groups, those listing an ideal size of 1,000 usually reported 400 to 600 audience members per performance, and although a new PAC will likely increase audience sizes, it will not double them. It should also be noted that the high school will still be available for the events drawing over 600 people – especially if some high school drama activity is moved out to the valley high school auditorium, which will be better suited to youth drama productions.

There are two important drawbacks to this size of facility. It will be too large for many groups needing a 150 to 250 seat venue; and it will not be large enough for some productions that need higher revenues to survive. Specifically, large out-of-town acts such as Broadway shows may need a minimum number of revenue seats per performance in order to justify their high production costs.

Note: With the new valley high school auditorium (with 500-600 seats) possibly coming on line by 2005, the demand for an additional venue this size will decrease. However, its location may diminish potential users. In addition, as a school district

facility, it may have the same scheduling problems as the current high school auditorium.

The potential 20th Century Theater remodel would also affect demand for the 500-600 seat theater. However, without adequate wing space, the facility may not be able to accommodate drama or dance performances.

800 to 1,000 Seats

This size of PAC would get a moderate amount of usage, according to our survey of local groups. It would provide a like-sized alternative to the high school auditorium, which, as the only true PAC of a substantial size in Juneau, is currently in very high demand. It may attract out-of-town acts to Juneau that currently cannot perform here due to scheduling conflicts and/or design limitations of the high school auditorium. And it would provide a more performance-oriented, and thus more desirable, atmosphere than the current high school auditorium.

The drawbacks to a large-scale facility are, first and foremost, operating and construction costs. A larger facility would obviously cost more to build, heat, clean, staff, etc. Another drawback is the level of usage. Taking into account all of the data collected from performing arts groups on their attendance levels, this size of facility would not come close to being filled more than a few times a year. Just two non-school productions filled the high school auditorium (1,000 seats) last year, and only a few more fell in the 700-800 range.

A note about the larger-size PAC (1,500 to 2,000 seats): Although a handful of the groups surveyed supported the idea of a larger PAC, several factors led the study team to reconsider the idea. One, these groups would use such a space for only a few days out of the year. Two, judging from their and others' attendance numbers, filling such a space would be a very difficult task. Three, based on our case studies, 1,500-2,000 seats appears far too large to be sustained by our small population base. (For example, Anchorage's theater of 2,100 sells out about once a month, drawing from a population base of 260,000.) Finally, it is clear that the cost of construction and operation of such a large-scale facility could never be justified by its usage.

Recommendations

The study team recommends that the PAC planning team begin with a preliminary assessment of costs for the "convertible" type facility, such as that used in Kodiak (theirs is a three-stage facility of 500, 125, and 125 seats that can be converted into a 750 seat theater). Juneau has a need for venue space on various size levels, as described above -- a PAC that answers two or three different size needs at once may be ideal. Preliminary cost assessments should also be conducted for smaller and larger facilities. A range of costs for different size facilities will be required to fully understand the trade-offs between size and cost.

The PAC planning team should next assess community support and funding options for the proposed PAC.

As the above cost and funding research tasks are explored, there are other considerations to bear in mind, including local versus non-local use priorities; PAC amenities such as rehearsal, studio, and gallery space; location; and the affect on demand of potential future facilities (such as the Palace Theatre and the 20th Century Theater remodels).

Finally, a detailed cost assessment should be conducted that addresses both construction and long-term operating costs. Ultimately, the optimal PAC size will be a balance between size, capital and operating cost, and community support.

Performing Arts Groups/Organizations Contacted

Alaska Folk Festival
Alaska Youth Choir
Aside Productions
Celebration
Contradancers
Cross Sound Productions
Crossings Productions
Dave Hunsaker
Fraternal Order of State Troopers*
Glacier Valley Rotary Club*
Janice Holst Dancers
Juneau Arts and Humanities Council
Juneau Brass Quintet/Woodwind Quintet
Juneau Coop Preschool*
Juneau Dance Unlimited
Juneau Douglas High School drama program
Juneau Douglas Little Theatre
Juneau Folk Dancers
Juneau Jazz and Classics
Juneau Lyric Opera
Juneau middle/high school bands
Juneau Montessori*
Juneau Student Symphony
Juneau Symphony
L'Ecole de Ballet
Native dance groups
Northern Light Junior Theater
Opera to Go
Peace Officers Association*
Perseverance Theatre
Ron Maas
Sitka Summer Music Festival
Storybox Storytelling Theatre
String Bass Quartet Cohen Trio
Strohler-White Pipes and Drums
Theatre in the Rough
Thrush Hill Music Academy
University of Alaska Southeast Student Activities Center

**These organizations are not oriented around performing arts, but occasionally sponsor performing arts events.*

Performing Arts Facilities Contacted

American Legion
ANB Hall
Assembly Chambers
Back Room
Baranof Hotel
Capitol School Gym
Centennial Hall
Chapel by the Lake
Community Schools
Elks Club
Gold Town Nickelodeon
Hangar Ballroom
Hendrickson Little Theater (UAS)
JDHS Auditorium
Marine Park
Marlintini's
McPhetres Hall
Mike's Place
Northern Light United Church
Perseverance Theatre
Resurrection Lutheran Church
Scottish Rite Temple
SOB Atrium
State Museums
Tramway
UAS Student Activities Center
VFW Hall

Case Study Contacts

Karl Deitrich, Executive Director, Bank of America Performing Arts Center in Wenatchee, Washington, (509) 665-9096
Chris Dray, Executive Director, Yukon Arts Centre in Whitehorse, (867) 667-6577
Don Etherington, formerly a board member of the Bank of America Performing Arts Center in Wenatchee, Washington, (509) 679-2261
Shawn Farmer, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, (907) 263-2919
Ruth Glenn, Anchorage Concert Association, (907) 272-1471
Nancy Kemp, Kodiak Arts Council, (907) 486-5291
Rick Langfitt, Auditorium Manager, Gerald C. Wilson Auditorium in Kodiak, (907) 486-9298
Ed Noonan, Executive Director, Myrna Loy Center in Helena, Montana, (406) 443-0287

Survey Instruments (attached)

**Juneau Performing Arts Center
Needs Assessment:
User Groups Survey**

Conducted by:



Contact: Heather Haugland, Project Manager
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Dear Owner/Manager,

The Juneau Arts and Humanities Council has commissioned the McDowell Group to conduct a needs assessment for a new performing arts center in Juneau. As part of this project, we are conducting a survey of local performing arts groups and organizations. This information will help us determine the existing and potential demand for a new performing arts facility in Juneau. All survey responses are confidential and will remain in the McDowell Group office. Please call or email if you have any questions regarding this survey. We urge you to respond as soon as possible by fax or email. In the event we don't receive your response by Friday, April 5, a McDowell Group interviewer may contact you by telephone to assist you with responding.

** Thank you for your assistance with this important project! **

****Some questions may not apply to your performing arts group/organization****

1. Name of group _____
2. Please describe the nature of your performing arts activity. _____

3. How many events did your group sponsor in Juneau in 2001? _____ 2000? _____ 1999? _____
4. What is your season timeline? (September-May, summers only, etc.) _____
5. Please tell us about your **2001** Juneau performances/events (or your last full season). If there were more than 8 events, please attach an extra page. Include outreach events such as lectures, student programs, etc. **"Additional days"** are those days before and after the performance where your group had exclusive use of the facility: for rehearsals, set-up, break-down, "dark days," set construction, etc.

Event	Date(s) of Performance	Additional Days at Venue	Attendance	Venue	Venue Rental Fee	Additional Venue Charges*

**Insurance, set-up fees, equipment rental fees, janitorial services, and other costs not included in the basic venue rental fee.*

6. Please list your typical ticket prices for the following categories:

General _____ Student _____ Senior _____ Family _____ Subscriber _____
Other _____

8. Has the quality or quantity of performing arts spaces in Juneau limited your ability to offer performances? If so, how? (Scheduling conflicts, cost of venue rental, available venues are not appropriate, etc.)

9. Has the quality or quantity of available performing arts space in Juneau limited your ability to draw greater audiences? If so, how? (Inadequate seating capacity, poor acoustics, etc.)

10. Please describe the venue that would best suit the specific needs of your performing arts group. Be as specific as you like, and attach an additional page if necessary.

Audience capacity: _____

Stage type and size: _____

Draperies: _____

Sound system: _____

Lighting system: _____

Recording capabilities: _____

Dressing room, Green Room, kitchen: _____

Other: _____

11. If such a space were available, would you expect higher gross receipts? Yes No

If so, would these higher receipts come from... higher ticket prices? Yes No

larger audiences? Yes No

subscription series offered? Yes No

12. If such a space were available, would you be willing to pay more for rental? Yes No

13. Can you estimate the number of days per year you would use such a venue? _____

14. Do you feel that Juneau needs an additional performing arts venue?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

**Juneau Performing Arts Center
Needs Assessment:
Facility Inventory**

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* Thank you for your assistance with this important project! *

1. Name of facility _____

2. Who owns the facility? _____

3. Who administers the facility? _____

4. What is the primary purpose of the facility? _____

Does it serve any other purposes? _____

5. Please describe your "performing arts" space.

Audience capacity: _____

Wheelchair accessible? Yes No

Stage type and size: _____

Draperies: _____

Sound system: _____

Lighting system: _____

Dressing room, Green Room, kitchen: _____

Other: _____

6. How often was your space used by performing arts groups in 1999, 2000, and 2001?

	1999	2000	2001
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 to 5 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 2 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 to 3 times a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once every 2 to 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once every 4 to 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____			

7. What are the days of the week and hours your facility is available to performing arts groups?

Days: _____ Hours: _____

Year round Seasonal: _____

8. What are your rental rates? Please specify the applicable time periods – per hour, per evening, per weekend, per matinee, etc.

9. Are there any other charges or fees associated with using your venue? (insurance, equipment rental, etc.)

10. How important are the revenues you earn from performing arts rentals to the overall operation of your facility?

Very important Important Somewhat important Not important

11. What percentage of your annual budget comes from rentals by performing arts groups? _____%

12. Which performing arts groups use your facility?

13. Does your facility ever turn away performing arts groups due to limited space and/or limited availability?

Yes No

If so, how many times did this happen in 2001? _____ 2000? _____ 1999? _____

14. Do you feel that Juneau needs an additional performing arts venue?

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