



Press Release

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## **Pottawattamie Arts, Culture and Entertainment announces major gift and new partnerships**

*Council Bluffs couple makes a significant donation creating a permanent home for a theatre, ballet company and community orchestra.*

COUNCIL BLUFFS, (Iowa) -- Plans for the Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center took another major step forward today announcing a major gift from Polina and Bob Schlott. The Council Bluffs couple's donation is part of a nearly \$25 million campaign in the renovation and transformation of the empty Harvester II building and the construction of a new performing arts center into a destination for art, theater and entertainment.

The performing arts center will now be known as the Polina and Bob Schlott Performing Arts Center.

"With the Southwest Iowa arts community, the Iowa West Foundation has been developing the initiative for PACE for five years with tremendous support of community leaders and their recognition of the importance of this effort for our communities in Southwest Iowa," said Iowa West Foundation President Pete Tulipana.

The Schlotts are long-time supporters of the arts in both Omaha and Council Bluffs. They are both involved with several nonprofit organizations. Bob Schlott serves on the Iowa West Foundation board of directors, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Children's Square U.S.A. and KANEKO. Polina Schlott is a long-time mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters and serves on the boards of directors of Boys and Girls Clubs of the Midlands and Southwest Iowa Board of Trustees, Children's Square U.S.A., Lauritzen Gardens, KANEKO, Phoenix Academy and University of Nebraska Medical Center Graduate Studies external advisory board.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to support such an exciting initiative right here in Council Bluffs," said Polina. "Arts are essential for advancing modern society through self-discovery, expression, our history, education and creativity. It is vital for our community to continue to nurture, encourage and support performing arts."

Ted and Polly Hoff, for whom the Arts and Culture Center is named, were also on hand for the announcement. Ted Hoff told those gathered that the gift he and his wife Polly gave was to help serve as a magnet that will bring many small arts and culture organizations to the arts and culture center. "By PACE becoming strong," Hoff said, "all of these organizations will become stronger."

Also at the event held Tuesday, July 18, 2017, Judy Davis, PACE executive director announced that the Chanticleer Community Theater, a part of the Council Bluffs arts scene for more than 65 years will be moving to the Polina and Bob Schlott Performing Arts Center as its new permanent home.

"Council Bluffs has been home to Chanticleer for more than six decades," said Davis. "We're so happy to be able to provide them a new place where we hope they will continue to produce plays for many decades to come."

"Chanticleer Theater is so proud and thrilled to know our new home will be housed in the new Performing Arts Center," said Denise Putman, president of the Chanticleer Theater. "Our current building has served us well, but to have a facility that will allow us the space and beautiful atmosphere in which to perform is so very exciting. We are so thankful to the Hoff's and the Schlotts for their generous donations and their support of the arts."

This summer Chanticleer served 43 children at its camp with more than 200 people attending the program on the final day.

Also moving to the new performing arts center will be Ballet Nebraska, the region's only professional dance company. The Company will continue to offer performances in both Omaha and Council Bluffs. To reflect its expanded region, Ballet Nebraska will re-brand itself beginning next season (2018-2019) as American Midwest Ballet.

"We are so excited to have a home base in this beautiful, state-of-the-art facility," said Erika Overturff, Ballet Nebraska's founder, artistic director and chief executive officer. "Consolidating our rehearsal, production and administrative functions under one roof will allow us to become even more efficient and productive as we continue to bring high-quality ballet to the region. We are so grateful for the vision and leadership of the Iowa West Foundation, PACE and all of the supporters who are helping make this wonderful project possible."

The Chanticleer and American Midwest Ballet will be joined by the Kaneshville Symphony at the Polina and Bob Schlott Performing Arts Center. The Symphony, founded in 2014, is like no other in the Midwest. It is open to all musicians, all ages and all musical instruments. Membership is free and open to any musician who wishes to join.

The Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center and the Polina and Bob Schlott Performing Arts Center, which are slated to open in 2019, will provide a collection of resources unique in the region. Arts groups on both sides of the river are working on programming plans that will use the center's facilities for the benefit of Southwest Iowa as well as the Omaha metro area.

**\*\*\*photos of the ballet and other assets can be found on the PACE website at [www.paceartsiowa.org](http://www.paceartsiowa.org)**

**About PACE**

Pottawattamie Arts, Culture & Entertainment (PACE) is a 34-year-old organization, originally organized as the Bluffs Arts Council, with a mandate to promote Council Bluffs as a center for excellence in the arts. Today, its focus is on a strategic approach to arts programming within the community, partnering with the Chanticleer Theater, American Midwest Ballet and the Kanesville Symphony in transforming the historic Harvester II building in the Haymarket District of Council Bluffs into a center for arts and culture in Pottawattamie County. For more information visit [www.paceartsiowa.org](http://www.paceartsiowa.org)

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