

# THE RAMSDELL: A NEW CENTURY

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## Introduction

“Ramsdell’s Folly” has stood at the southeast corner of First and Maple Streets in Manistee for over 108 years, defying not only the elements, but the whims and caprices of audiences and the entertainments they seek. Frequently referred to as a “community cultural center,” the building is actually two buildings joined by a solid masonry wall. The theatre fills the southern section while a large “assembly hall” with a large ballroom and “parlors” (Hardy Hall) are in the northern section.

Though professional theatre in the form of traveling companies provided the bulk of the early entertainment in the theatre portion, a variety of other live performances and film has been interspersed throughout. Offerings were almost exclusively film in the late 1920s prior to an almost seven year span that it was dark during the depression. Film returned in 1937 while amateur dramatic productions with local casts were produced in the late 1930s prior to another nine years with no productions until professional stock returned in 1951. The Manistee Drama Festival, later Manistee Summer Theatre, carried The Ramsdell’s operations into the early 1960s when the Manistee Civic Players (MCP) took up the mantel with amateur community theatre productions.

Besides film and theatre, the fine art in the theatre portion is augmented by paintings and other artifacts in the assembly hall portion and, more recently, exhibits by the Manistee Art Institute (MAI) in what was originally referred to as the “parlors.” Education activities have also been prevalent with many school programs presented there prior to construction of newer school buildings, as well as dance and drama classes for all ages including college credit programs offered in conjunction with the summer theatre program. Music concerts of all types, travelogues, lectures, talent shows and whatever else was offered as entertainment in the early part of the twentieth century have been presented for the benefit of Manistee audiences.

At the same time the Theatre was struggling to remain in operation, being closed 18 of its first 50 years, the assembly hall welcomed a variety of activities throughout. Grand balls originally occupied the huge hall furnished with monogrammed china, crystal and silver purchased specially by Ramsdell. It also served as a dining hall, meeting and exhibit space, dance studio, basketball court/recreation facility and, in a strange twist of fate, a roller skating rink – the same business that occupied the site prior to Ramsdell’s purchase and construction. Weddings have recently become popular and are expected to become more so as air conditioning is added for the prime celebration months.





As The Ramsdell struggled through various periods, ownership also shifted. Ramsdell died in 1917 and, following the death of his widow in 1923, the executors of the estate sought to relieve the tax burden by selling the complex. Following a failed effort to get the City involved, the Rotary purchased it for \$25,000 in 1925. They operated it and then leased the theatre portion to the Butterfield circuit. The City came back into the game as World War II began and leased the hall for a Michigan State Troops armory and used the ballroom for the Manistee Recreation Association. As part of that lease agreement, they took full ownership in 1953.

Subsequent lease agreements with the Civic Players left them managing the entire facility until the financial burden became too great. In 2005, the City of Manistee formed the Ramsdell Governance Committee to provide ongoing oversight to the management, maintenance and restoration efforts of The Ramsdell. This committee was drawn from the organizations then using the Complex on a regular basis – the Manistee Civic Players and Manistee Art Institute – as well as the Restoration Committee, and is dedicated to maintaining The Ramsdell for future generations. The committee is charged with managing the revenues of the buildings from its users and expanding the building's use while reducing the demands on the City's budget, which is now the main source of operating funds for the complex. This committee took on full responsibility for The Ramsdell in mid 2006.

Through the many changes in ownership and leadership dating back to T. J. Ramsdell's original concept, the one constant has been the desire to do something for the betterment of the community. Similar language came up each time the building changed hands to encourage a purchase or lease, or as an argument to get to work and get The Ramsdell re-opened. Ramsdell, himself, is cited for his strong interest in and constant work for the improvement of the community. The *Manistee News* in his obituary even said: "The theatre which bears his name is a fitting reminder of this man who did so much for the betterment of the community."

This report seeks to assist the Governors in their task of expanding the building's use while reducing the demands on the City's budget, and help ensure that the complex is maintained for the betterment of the community well into the future. In doing so, it's important to remember that The Ramsdell's history not only defines what it has been, but leads the way to what it could become.

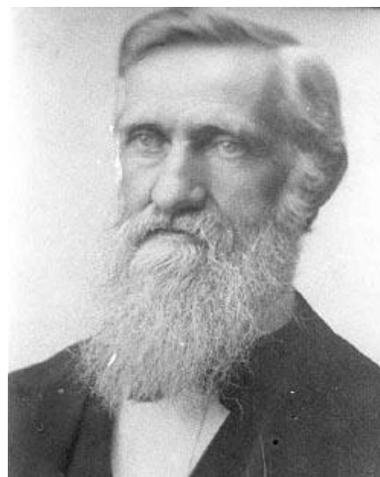
*Uniqueness cannot be invented. A sense of place is something acquired over the lifetime of your community. It is the physical result of allowing the continuity of time to remain in place. Ambiance is created over time by the permanence of its collective memory. A collective memory of a people aware and proud of their past can be shared with others, who are not themselves part of that past, through the physical symbols they have accrued through time. Just as a grandmother shares her childhood memories by a narrated tour through her scrapbooks or old party dresses, so a city shares its memories through the continued use of its old buildings . . .*

Killis P. Almond, Jr. –  
*Bulletin of the League of Historic American Theatres*

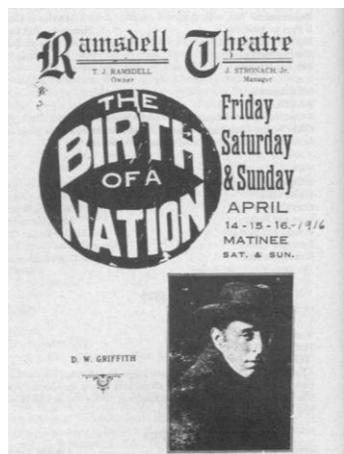


## History

Built by Thomas Jefferson Ramsdell, pioneer lawyer, state legislator, and civic leader, the building was designed to fill the entertainment void left in the community by the loss of the Scandinavian Society hall to a fire on December 17, 1900. Ramsdell announced his plans the following December and foundations were being laid in April of 1902. Two balls were presented in December of that year to inaugurate the ballroom, with the grand opening of the Theatre on September 4, 1903.



The Ramsdell's primary use throughout its history has involved some type of theatrical presentation. In the first two years of operations, almost eighty traveling professional theatre productions were presented. Activity declined after that due to management changes and competition from the outdoor Orchard Beach Casino Theatre until The Ramsdell was leased in 1909 for three years to a professional company from Chicago. Productions increased again that year but declined thereafter until the lease terminated. Activity was limited to an average of 14 traveling companies per year from 1911 to 1917 until closing for the war in 1918-19. Also during this period, "moving pictures" began to appear on a sporadic basis. D.W. Griffith's now infamous "Birth of a Nation" was shown in 1916, but this was 12 years after the first showing of a moving picture "concept" (probably slides) in the Theatre by the International Bioscope company and the appearance of nickelodeons at Orchard Beach.



Road shows dwindled to two per year in the early twenties while high school plays were also presented. Movies became regular fare in 1925 after the Rotary purchase of the building. An occasional stock company visited, and a local troupe presented a show in 1929, but the Theatre, after being leased to the Butterfield circuit, was silent from 1930 through 1936 due to the depression. Films began again in 1937 with new equipment.





Theatre presentations again became the mainstay in the late 1930s as the Kiwanis sponsored local talent productions, a WPA sponsored puppet theatre operated primarily for children, and the Civic Players formed to present their first production in 1939. After four more productions by the Players, the City leased the building from the Rotary trust in 1941, however, aside from Home Guard drills during the war, basketball, and Manistee Recreation Association community youth activities in the assembly hall, the Theatre was dark for another nine years.

Members of various women's clubs in the city organized as the Civic Betterment Committee and took on the task of restoring The Ramsdell in 1949. Theatrical presentations returned with a performance by the Muskegon Civic Players in 1950. The following year professional stock returned to the Theatre during the summers and continued through 1963. Six to eight productions were produced with a new show each week along with children's theatre productions and, in 1956, off-campus college courses offered in conjunction with Central Michigan University. The City took full ownership from the Rotary in 1953. In 1954, the Manistee Civic Players name was revived and they began producing local cast plays in the off-season.

After the Manistee Summer Theatre ended in 1963, the Manistee Civic Players began producing approximately four shows each year with at least one of them being a musical production. In 1972, The Ramsdell was listed on the National Register for Historic Places and was also leased to the Players to manage the theatre portion and to continue restoration work. In 1989, the Civic Players petitioned the City for the lease to the entire building including the hall portion, intending to use the lower hall for gallery and classroom space in an effort to develop a "Cultural Arts Center."

In 1990, in addition to their amateur community theatre productions, this vision took shape as MCP presented professional performing artists, developed art and museum exhibits, hosted ACT I (Actively Creative Theatre – a joint effort of MCP, MISD and county schools) and summer workshops in drama (The Ramsdell Theatre Children's Workshop) and dance (Dance Project). The following year added lunch-time "brown bag" piano concerts and other presentations.

Also in 1990, a new group, the Ramsdell Restoration Committee, was established to provide a venue for fund raising and managing the process of restoration based on the recommendations in a Master Plan for restoration developed by Preservation Architects, Quinn Evans. In the succeeding 16 years a significant portion of the plan was implemented as the Restoration Committee was able to raise over \$5,000,000 in cash and matching work.

In 2004, it became obvious to the MCP that supporting the building's operations was financially impossible and they asked that the City consider forming a Governance planning committee to support ongoing operations of the complex. Formed in 2005, the Ramsdell Governance Committee took full financial responsibility for The Ramsdell in 2006.





# **I. AUDIENCES AND MARKET**

## **A. Market Area**

## **B. Competitive Environment**

## **C. Demographics**

1. Manistee County/Prime Market Area
2. Regional Market Area
3. Tapestry Profiles

## **D. Tourists and Visitors**

## **E. Conclusions**



## Market Area

The market area for The Ramsdell varies considerably by activity. While Manistee County is the general market area, within the County there is a “**prime market**” for most activities that exists within a radius of 20 to 25 miles north and east and a short extension south into Mason County as far as Free Soil. The market area for certain attractions that could be considered a “destination”, however, might have a much broader reach that could easily extend out for a sixty mile radius for potential audiences.

For mainstream film, local or little-known musical attractions, and most of the MCP shows, the market area is limited by the availability of theatres in other communities, so there is a limit to the distance that audiences would travel regardless of pricing or amenity upgrades that might make The Ramsdell more appealing. Notwithstanding some experiences with Traverse City patrons frequenting MCP productions due to more modern and “offensive” fare offered by their local troupe, the market area for these attractions is mostly limited to the prime market area within Manistee County and a little ways south into Mason.

Unique film or live broadcasts and regional or national musical attractions should draw from a broader or **regional market** area which reaches into Benzie, Wexford, Lake and Mason Counties, with some reach into Oceana and Newago. Likewise, MCP musical presentations done in conjunction with Dr. Plummer and West Shore Community College have shown an increase in patrons from the Ludington area, specifically, and, more generally, from the coastal areas to the south. There is some anecdotal evidence that suggests some of the audiences may be distinguishing between the productions based on Dr. Plummer’s reputation, enhanced production values for his shows, and some different cast members not usually seen in MCP productions. One patron even admitted to buying tickets only for the WSCC co-productions after many years as a season ticketholder.

Educational offerings are probably limited to participants within a comfortable driving time of the facility, i.e., a slightly reduced sphere within the prime market area. All types of activities benefit from the summer tourist traffic.

These market areas are similar to those identified by Beckett & Raeder, Inc. in their *Downtown Strategic Plan*. In that report, on page 73, maps depict a “local trade area (LTA),” similar to the prime market area, and a “regional trade area (RTA),” similar to the broader market area discussed above.





## Competitive Environment

Again, whether or not some facility is a competing venue varies by activity. For mainstream film, local or little-known musical attractions, and most of the MCP shows, competition is on all three sides geographically. For mainstream film, specifically, as well as unique films and live broadcasts, the Garden Theatre in Frankfort, recently renovated and now open year-round, is already offering fare similar to what The Ramsdell might in these categories. Audiences are not expected to choose that theatre over The Ramsdell for similar activities, but it might prove closer to Arcadia residents for their regular attendance.

The Ramsdell's potential film offerings cannot be directly competitive with traditional movie houses due to scheduling restrictions, but these locations will continue to be competitive in a general fashion for meeting audiences' entertainment needs. Most residents have already been traveling to Ludington, about thirty minutes to the south, since The Vogue closed, where Carmike's Harbor Cinemas offers eight screens and 3-D in a modern facility. There are three additional theatres within an hour's drive – Carmike's Grand Traverse Cinemas and Horizons Cinemas, both in Traverse City, and the Goodrich Cadillac 5 in Cadillac. All appear to offer at least five screens. Then, there is the State Theatre in downtown Traverse City with its special and unique offerings in a vibrant environment. In the summer, there might be some traffic going to the Cherry Bowl Drive-In, one of the last functioning drive-ins in the state and within an hour from downtown Manistee.

For local or little-known musical attractions, almost any bar, club or local organization that presents these groups at no cost to patrons is competitive. For the better known acts, the Little River Casino offers significantly better financial incentives for the groups due to their size and pricing advantages, not to mention the lure of the Casino for certain demographics.

Not included in the regional market area or "close-in" competitive environment is the Grand Traverse/Leelanau Peninsula area. Though most of this area is either in or just beyond the sixty-mile radius, it has not been included because of the extensive offerings "closer to home." The wide array of attractions available year-round is always going to be competitive in a general fashion, and specifically so for certain offerings. It is anticipated that certain activities might attract visitors from this area, however, it is more likely that audiences in Manistee's prime market area will travel north for the wide array of restaurants and entertainments available there.



## Demographics – Manistee County/Prime Market Area

There are distinct variables within the County's demographics relative to geography, with higher incomes and populations clustered along the coast, and the older age groups more to the north. For potential offerings at The Ramsdell, not only income, but the size and variety of different age groups, the number of families with children, education levels, and the distance from The Ramsdell become important characteristics.

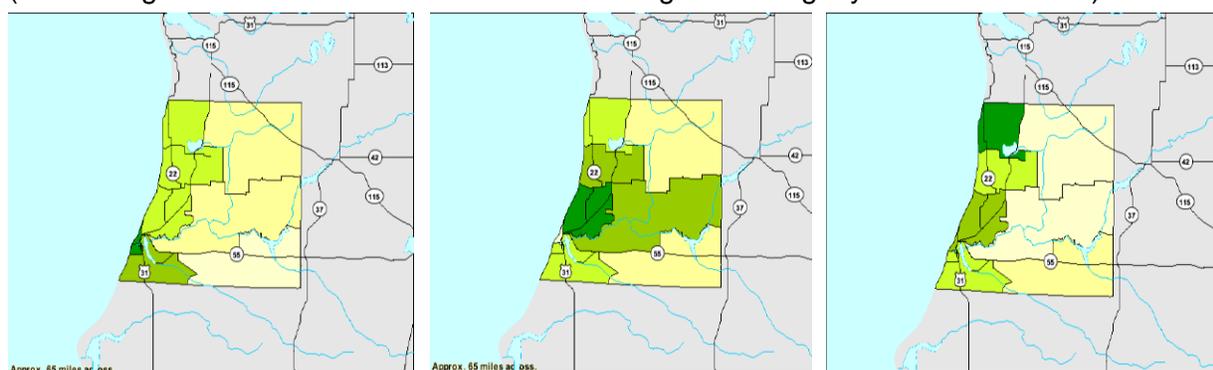


Included in the County's 24,741 population total (2009 estimated), there are 1,155 children under the age of five, and another 2,695 of elementary through middle-school age. Another 1,433 are in the 15 to 19 years grouping. With a total population of 19,183 over age 21, over 7,700 are aged 45 through 64 with another 4,100 between 65 and 84. All represent good sized markets for different types of films and attractions, though some of the individual quantities suggest some restrictions. The median age is 45.4, slightly higher than the state average of 37.7 and the national average of 36.7, suggesting a growing segment of seniors/retirees. Almost 20% of the population is 65 years or older with another 31% between 45 and 64 – a total “mature” base of just over 50%. Approximately 25% of the family households have children under 18 years – a total of about 1,700 homes.

Education levels are strong with high school graduates (and higher) totaling 85.9% of those 25 years or older. This is close to both state and national averages. Those with Bachelor's degrees (or higher) are the smaller part of this and total only 16.0%, significantly below the state average of 24.5% and the national average of 27.5%.

Median household incomes and median family incomes both significantly trail state and national figures. For instance, the median family income was \$48,690 compared to \$60,635 statewide and \$62,363 nationally.

Besides the quantity and quality of the various statistics, their physical location in the County and distance from The Ramsdell is also important. Though the population density is highest in the City (south of the river) before spreading north and south along the coast, the income is stronger to the north of downtown and then inland, while those 65 years and older are more concentrated in the far north of the County with another strong area matching the income map. (The dark green is the densest concentration fading out to a light yellow for the least):



*Population density*

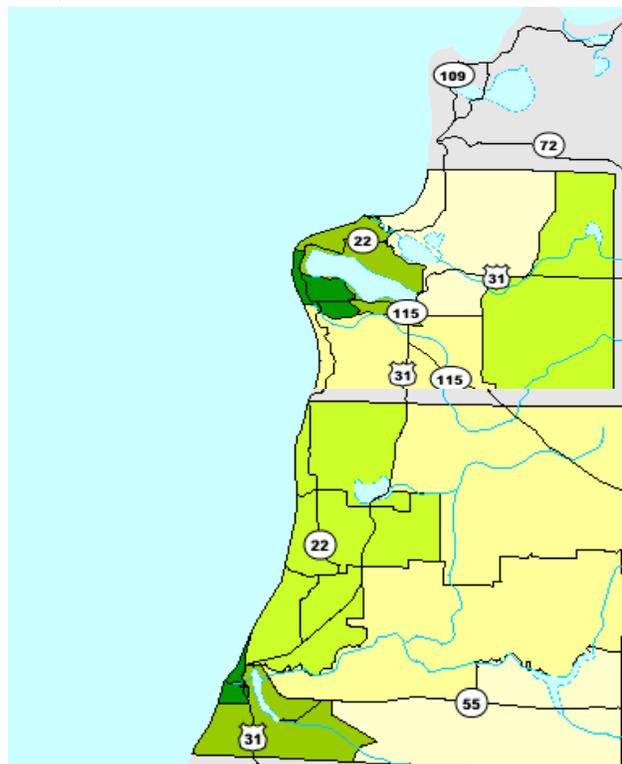
*Income density*

*65+ years*

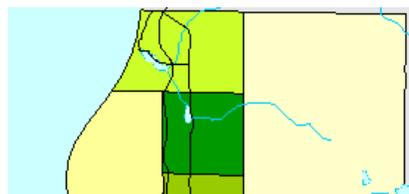
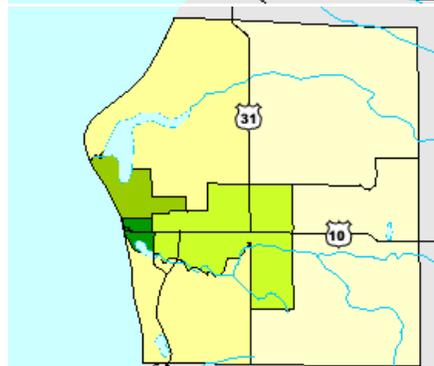
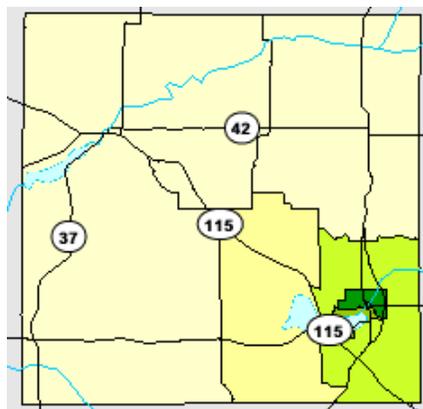


## Demographics – Regional Market Area

The six-county regional market area for The Ramsdell goes out in an almost sixty-mile radius of the facility and has similar characteristics to the prime market area. The total population for this area is 140,305 with just a few more males than females. There are almost 89,000 housing units with more than a third vacant and just over half owner-occupied. High school graduates (or higher) make up 85% of the population over age 25, near state and national averages, while those with Bachelor's degrees or higher total only 16% - well below state and national figures. Median family incomes range from approximately \$42,700 to \$48,700 except for Lake County at \$32,000.



Population density throughout the region is very light, especially inland. Less than 40% of the area's population (53,561) are within thirty minutes driving time. Though rural residents are accustomed to driving for shopping and entertainment, this means that more than half of the region's population is a significant drive away, and longer distances reduce frequency of visits.



*A significant portion of the more distant population is in Cadillac (above) or in other cities with competing amenities.*

*Starting at the top left is Benzie County, followed down the coast by Manistee, Mason, and part of Oceana. The inland counties to the right are Wexford and Lake. Though the density colorations are scaled slightly differently for each county, the general effect of the greens being more populated and the yellows less so gives a good picture of the more rural nature of the six county area.*



## Demographics – Tapestry Profiles

A thorough knowledge of audiences is critical to an organization’s success. The management needs to understand their customers in order to supply them the right products and services and to reach them via their preferred media. The versatility and predictive power of Tapestry Segmentation can help make this happen.

Segmentation systems operate on the theory that people with similar tastes, lifestyles, and behaviors seek others with the same tastes – “like seeks like.” These behaviors can be measured. The Tapestry Segmentation system combines the “who” of lifestyle demography with the “where” of local neighborhood geography to create a model of various lifestyle classifications or segments of actual neighborhoods to paint a picture of exactly who the residents are, what types of jobs they hold, what their buying preferences are, what lifestage they are in and, finally, how they compare to the general U.S. population.

In these studies, every neighborhood in the United States has been clustered into one of 65 Segments based on sociographic and demographic composition. In turn, these Segments belong to 12 “LifeMode” Groups based on lifestyle and lifestage. In these LifeMode groupings, members share an experience, i.e., being born in the same time period, facing the same lifestage, having a certain level of affluence, etc. The segmentation process further considers: income, occupation, educational attainment, ethnic origin, household composition, marital/living arrangements, patterns of migration, mobility and communication, lifestyle and media patterns.

The County residents were identified in only thirteen segments in six LifeMode Groups. The most predominant was the *American Quilt* Group with strong numbers from the *Rural Resort Dweller* and *Rooted Rural* Segments. The *Senior Styles* group was next largest, but a third less, with top Segments *Heartland Communities* and *Simple Living*. Complete Group results included:

<u>LifeMode Groups</u>	
<i>L02 – Upscale Avenues</i>	3.1%
<i>L05 – Senior Styles</i>	30.8%
<i>L07 – High Hopes</i>	2.5%
<i>L10 – Traditional Living</i>	7.4%
<i>L11 – Factories &amp; Farms</i>	9.8%
<i>L12 – American Quilt</i>	46.4%

In reviewing the Tapestry findings, the BrandPrint study reported that the LifeMode concentrations along with the more specific Segments represented suggest that residents share a small-town lifestyle and mentality with traditional values. “Residents tend to be older and fall mainly in the middle income bracket with the rural setting dictating many of their lifestyle choices. Compared against the U.S. average, Manistee County’s peaks clearly surpass the national averages. Spanning across only 13 of the 65 Segments also indicates a fairly low diversity of lifestyles and lifestages amongst residents.”

The two most dominant Groups for Manistee County can be summarized as:

***American Quilt*** – a diverse microcosm of small-town life; includes the Rural Resort Dwellers segment, an older population that is retiring to seasonal vacation spots, and the Crossroads segment, a younger, family population that favors mobile homes.



Households in American Quilt are more affluent, with a median income of \$44,478; enjoy fishing and hunting (and power boats) and have a preference for pickups and country music.

**Senior Styles** – illustrates the diversity among today’s senior markets; incomes within this group cover a wide range, the median is approximately \$44,094, attributable mostly to retirement income or Social Security payments. Golf is clearly their sport of choice, from playing to just watching the Golf Channel. They read the newspaper daily

The complete Segments represented, reported in numerical order as the Segment numbering codes are designed to show household income at its highest level at number one and then declining as the numbers go higher, include:

Tapestry Segments

- 14 – *Prosperous Empty Nesters*
- 18 – *Cozy and Comfortable*
- 25 – *Salt of the Earth*
- 29 – *Rustbelt Retirees*
- 31 – *Rural Resort Dwellers*
- 32 – *Rustbelt Traditions*
- 33 – *Midlife Junction*
- 42 – *Southern Satellites*
- 46 – *Rooted Rural*
- 48 – *Great Expectations*
- 50 – *Heartland Communities*
- 53 – *Home Town*
- 57 – *Simple Living*

The most prevalent of the 13 Segments in Manistee County can be summarized as:

**Rural Resort Dwellers (26.9%)** – median age is 46 and the median household income is \$43,400; enjoy home improvements, baking, listening to country music, and hunting.

**Rooted Rural (19.5%)** – median age of 40.6 years; median income for households is \$36,000. Do-it-yourselfers, most people do their own house and car maintenance and repair; take pride in their gardens; prefer to cook their own food rather than dine out; prefer driving trucks to sedans.

Beyond these two, only *Heartland Communities* at 16% included any significant number of residents. The remaining Segments were at 5% or less.

Of some significance, is the fact that the four Manistee Segments listed prior to the mid-point of the income scale collectively represent 15% of the population.

More details on characteristics of the LifeMode Groups and Segments are included in the Appendix.



## Tourists and Visitors

All activities scheduled during the summer months or concurrent with large festivals are expected to benefit from tourists and visitors. This report cannot include the kind of marketing study necessary to identify and quantify that potential, however, the BrandPrint study also analyzed Manistee County visitors to develop a Tapestry Profile for them. Besides visiting the area themselves, they reviewed over 7,000 Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) inquiry records, conducted a lodging survey of overnight customers, and interviewed 200 residents from Chicago suburbs and Grand Rapids about their attitudes and perceptions of the area.

Not surprisingly, the **CVB records** identified high percentages for American Quilt and Senior Styles LifeModes, approximately 46% and 31% respectively; however, unlike Manistee County residents, there were larger percentages of people identified as High Society or Upscale Avenues reflecting higher income levels and wealth. This inquiry profile was also more diverse in lifestyles and lifestages, spanning across many more Segments than the resident profile. The inquiry profile was concentrated in the more affluent Segments with several significantly exceeding resident profiles:

**17 Green Acres (8%)** – married couples with and without children, the median age is 39 and the median HHI is \$61,000+.

**18 Cozy and Comfortable (7%)** – middle-aged, married couples settled in single-family homes; median age is 40.4 and median HHI is \$61,000.

**07 Exurbanites (5.8%)** – majority of residents are empty nesters, but the median age is 43; median HHI is \$80,000+.

**06 Sophisticated Squires (5.2%)** – mostly married-couple families; approximately 40% have children varying from toddler to over 18 years; median age is 37 and median HHI is \$79,000.

**25 Salt of the Earth (5.1%)** – married couples with and without children; median age of 39.8, median HHI is \$47,000.

The **Lodging Survey** found that 77% of the respondents had visited previously, most at least once or twice and many eight or more times. They were primarily from Michigan with Indiana and Florida the next most mentioned. For those coming from within Michigan, they were equally divided between Oakland, Wayne and Kent Counties. Two-thirds of the respondents were between 55 and 74 years old.

The **Consumer Awareness and Perception Study** found that 43% of the respondents earned \$75,000 or more. Of those who had visited, 29% had visited once and 45% had visited two to three times. Their primary purpose for taking a trip to Manistee County was outdoor recreation/lake recreation (51%), followed by visiting the casino (14%) and visiting family and friends (14%). While in Manistee County they ate at restaurants (74%), visited the beach (48%), and visited the City of Manistee (44%).



## Conclusions

The available data suggests that sufficient market exists to successfully increase offerings at The Ramsdell in a prudent manner and expect good attendance. In particular, some film offerings could do well in the short term as the travel currently required to find a movie house portends good support locally. More specifically:

- The prime market area, limited to Manistee County within a radius of 20 to 25 miles north and east and a short extension into Mason County as far as Free Soil, includes both sufficient numbers within the total population and in target age groups to support a variety of attractions. Both family and mature adult counts are very positive.
- Income levels in the area suggest price sensitivity for both tickets and concessions, which may affect the financial viability of certain attractions if excessive artist's fees or production costs are required.
- Though the overall education attainment level for the community is positive, the lower numbers for those with higher education degrees may restrict some specialty programming.
- Nothing in the Tapestry profiling suggests negative trends, while some of the information is particularly positive and supportive. Some of the data should suggest both programming opportunities as well as some restrictions.
- The Ramsdell should also benefit from the normal influx of summer visitors plus any additional traffic generated by festivals in the community. The visitor market, in particular, appears more financially viable than the prime market area with higher income levels as well as higher education levels.



## **II. PROPOSED PROGRAMMING**

### **A. Overview**

### **B. Current Programming**

1. Tenants
2. Other Current Programming
3. Facilities

### **C. Recommended Actions - Outline**

### **D. Recommended Actions – Narrative**

1. Live Performances
2. Film Exhibition
3. Concessions
4. Creative Learning Experiences
5. Ballroom Usage
6. Facilities



## Overview

With the exception of a few special presentations such as last September's Jeff Daniels appearance and November's "Live from the Front: Byline Ernie Pyle" sponsored by West Shore Community College, and a local film premiere, the offerings in The Ramsdell have become fairly predictable and infrequent. The only constant has been the five productions each season by the Manistee Civic Players along with the annual Rotary Variety Show and dance school presentations. Beyond the Players' offerings, there is no expectation in the community that any entertainments will be available at The Ramsdell.

That was not always the case. The near weekly offerings of the early days, the not so distant summer theatre days, and the even more recent activity of the 1990s, drew crowds of Manistee residents and summer visitors on a regular basis. Despite the gap in time, the history still suggests that there is a market for more activities. Just this past year, the Players demonstrated a larger market potential with near sold-out houses at their productions of "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Cabaret;" and full houses reported for the film premiere and Jeff Daniels performance are also very compelling and convincing. Beyond The Ramsdell, the Little River Casino has regularly drawn approximately 1,500 people twice a month for a variety of tribute and "oldies" bands. Some of these shows have had ticket prices as high as \$60, and offer only an armless chair in a modern, yet, singularly uninteresting venue.

To meet this "pent up" demand, a new resolve and commitment is necessary to fully realize the extraordinary potential that exists in this century-old complex. Its potential "new" purpose is really symbolized in its original design and its history since opening. It has always been a place for the community, offering a home not just for the "community arts," but the entire community. The grand balls, the meetings, and even the basketball games, are all important parts of its place in the community. When the Manistee Recreation Association ran programs there in the 1940s, they were for all of the community from kids to seniors representing a variety of interests and tastes. This greater purpose has been recognized since T. J. Ramsdell's original concept and design, and periodically re-enforced, such as in a letter to the Board of Commerce on June 25, 1919, from a former manager that supported their potential purchase of the building by "calling the citizens' attention to the wonderful asset a building of this kind was to the city, and to the many ways the city benefited by having such a fine proposition in its midst."

The "proposition" is now to embrace the entire complex as a new "Community Arts Center" (MCAC), not just the home of Manistee's existing creative class, but a place where young and old from all walks of life can learn and be entertained – even the "millhands and hired girls" who were originally relegated to the upper balcony. Though F. W. Ramsdell's paintings, the Walter Burridge act curtain, the brass railings and red plush seats are beautiful and wonderful historical pieces, it's time to put them in the proper context. They do not really represent what the building is about. Their real role is to make the entire facility welcoming and inviting. It should be a place where you don't have to be afraid to touch anything. It was designed to be used by the community, and should be much more regularly.

**Proposed Vision Statement – *Enriching our community by providing unique entertainment and learning experiences in a majestic theatre***

**Proposed Mission Statement – *To maintain an irreplaceable community asset as a vibrant entertainment and education center through programming excellence, fiscal stability, strong community partnerships, and committed volunteers***



## Current Programming – Tenants

**Manistee Civic Players** – With a long history dating back to 1939, MCP has built a strong base of audience support which currently averages about 200 people per performance. Some long term financial problems hampered operations in previous years, however, they seem in better fiscal health recently and continue to present a series of five productions (three musicals and two plays) with six performances scheduled over two weekends for each. Their 2009 season sold about \$66,000 in tickets with direct show expenses of about \$45,000. 2010 accounting is not complete but already includes \$68,000 in tickets and \$59,000 in direct expense without including *Cabaret*, one of their best attended shows though most expensive to produce.



Recent collaborations with West Shore Community College have enhanced production values and brought new cast members resulting in increased sales, especially from the Ludington area. However, it has also brought increased expenses and internal disputes over costs and quality issues. Audience members are noticing the differences, and there is some anecdotal evidence suggesting that they are “picking and choosing” the collaborations over the purely MCP productions, though some of that could be a reflection of musicals being more popular than straight plays. In the last two seasons, the 2009 plays only grossed \$7,000 and \$8,800 in sales, respectively, while the lone play in 2010 earned only \$4,400 – less than the cost of production.

The normal schedule for each production is for three weeks of set building and rehearsal followed by the final production/tech week that includes the opening performances and then the following week’s final performances – a total of five weeks for each show or 25 weeks per year. This half-year of usage includes only 30 income producing nights. In spite of protestations to the contrary, the stage is not readily available to other users during this time, and it appears to be difficult to entirely clear the space at anytime for other users to fully utilize the stage.

MCP also operates The Ramsdell tours, charging \$5 for visitors to be given a tour of the building in the summers. There has been difficulty luring tourists up the hill on a regular basis and they have recently restricted this activity to pre-arranged tours rather than being open certain hours and days. Inclusion of the nearby historic church in the tour package has helped.

Historically, MCP operated a number of educational programs, but participation levels were not up to expectations and none have been offered in recent years.

**Manistee Art Institute** – Formed in 1995, MAI currently has about 120 members and maintains a permanent collection of works primarily by local artists. They present five exhibits per year in T. Walter Hardy Exhibit Hall scheduled concurrently with the MCP productions. Their presence outside of The Ramsdell is greater and more readily available to community members. Art works are displayed at the Chamber of Commerce, Huntington Bank and City Hall, and they are involved in the Healing Arts Gallery at the hospital.

There is interest in providing more educational offerings, but currently the activity is limited due to teacher availability and the unfinished condition of a potential class room. They do provide a



“Picture Person” program, a mix of art history and hands-on activities, to subsidized housing locations, but prior inclusion of this program in the schools has been discontinued.

## Other Current Programming

As noted earlier, little other programming is available in The Ramsdell except for a recent film premiere and the following:

**West Shore Community College** – presented Jeff Daniels last fall as part of their Performing Art Series as well as “Live from the Front: Byline Ernie Pyle,” Rick Plummer’s one-man show. Dr. Plummer reported good sales for both productions. WSCC participation in the MCP shows is included in their on-campus series promotion and the college’s students are provided free admission to the productions.

**Ingrid Bond School of Dance** – though a regular user, she does not enjoy full tenant status. Ms. Bond’s schedule has been reduced in recent years as competition has increased. Classes are based on the teachings of Enricco Cecchetti and reflect her professional experience directing a modern company in Louisville. Her older students tend to be more interested in dance careers. In prior years, she collaborated with other teachers and schools in the area to present a full “Nutcracker” performance just prior to Thanksgiving. She still maintains the sets and costumes and would be interested in re-introducing the experience.

**Rotary Variety Show** – an annual tradition, three performances are presented Thursday thru Saturday night in the spring. Proceeds support their community service projects.

**Conservatory of Dance** – boasting an enrollment of 140 kids from age three to eighteen, the Conservatory presents two productions in the Theatre. A spring show includes all the students in varied offerings, while a winter program is a choreographed story production using the more advanced students. Each production takes a full week in the Theatre from Sunday load-in and rehearsal to the following weekend’s performances. The School offers a variety of dance styles and is active in competitions in the Midwest.

## Programming – Facilities

The last two decades have seen eighty years of wear removed from The Ramsdell and the shine returned to the main stage. More work is needed, however, to improve conditions backstage and upgrade heating and air conditioning. Work is under way on the latter as well as some of the backstage improvements, and drawings have been developed for the next phase of enhancements. Included in these plans are improvements in storage for MCP and MAI, as well as the development of new classrooms and offices and a “rathskeller” bar on the lower level. The lack of air conditioning in the ballroom has sorely inhibited the wedding business in the summer months, while inadequate space and the lack of climate-controlled facilities have put art and artifacts at the risk of permanent damage. Also, issues with accessibility and security inhibit more regular use of Hardy Hall and, possibly, other areas of the building. Some problems developed in the renovation. Seating in the center balcony is particularly uncomfortable due to poor spacing and the brass railings require near constant polishing to retain their appearance.



## **Recommended Actions**

### **Increase the availability of live performances in the Theatre for the community**

- Present a series of six high quality professional musical/theatrical programs scheduled on a monthly basis from September thru April (no performances in January) to augment the MCP productions
- Expand performances of the more popular MCP musicals with Thursday night showings to increase revenue and draw more people into the Theatre; first Thursday could be billed as a “preview” and offered at reduced cost to encourage newcomers
- Develop partnerships with high quality renters and promoters to further increase Theatre usage and audiences while providing a broader variety of attractions; develop technical brochures and rental agreements to aid promotion
- Explore adding a variety of single night music and comedy attractions to balance out the programming throughout the year and attract different audiences; explore the addition of a travelogue or lecture series co-presented with a local service club or other organization
- Exploit the facility’s historical legacy in programming that reflects various periods in the building’s history
- Promote The Ramsdell’s uniqueness and the feeling of a special experience for all audience members attending; open the gallery for all attractions to heighten the “sense of occasion” and expose more of the community to local artists

### **Initiate a new focus on film exhibition**

- Develop a regular schedule for an eclectic mix of classic films intermingled with more current foreign, art-house and independent films; occasionally include mainstream offerings of especially popular films as they become available in the post-break market
- Present a special series of films geared to children and families
- Add internet capability to provide live broadcasts in HD
- Encourage local filmmakers with opportunities for showings and discussions

### **Encourage attendance at new initiatives by adding beer and wine service and other concessions**

- Seek a “club” liquor license to minimize cost and form the base for an expanded membership development program
- Explore various concession offerings to determine popularity, ease of service and profitability; vary offerings to fit the event
- Provide an alternate venue within the facility for events that are particularly concession oriented

### **Augment programming and increase participation by area residents with innovative and creative learning experiences for all age groups; provide opportunities to enhance the audience’s understanding of the art forms represented**

### **Increase promotion efforts and add air conditioning to expand usage of the ballroom**

### **Review building plans to ensure they fully support programming needs and provide functional, revenue producing space**



## Live Performances

The National Endowment for the Arts' 2008 "Survey of Public Participation in the Arts" reported that about 35% of adults in the U.S. attended at least one arts activity during the year. The demographic information showed that women have higher attendance rates in most categories, and that arts attendance rose with age, education level and income. Counting all art forms, nearly one-third of adults reported going to at least one jazz, classical music, opera, musical, play, or ballet performance, not including elementary or high school shows. The Travel Industry Association of America enhances this data with their report showing that two-thirds of adult travelers include a cultural, arts, heritage or historical activity or event while on a trip of 50 miles or more from home.

A Ramsdell **presentation series** could offer "serious fun," as John Rockwell of the *New York Times* referred to his summer programming at Lincoln Center some years ago. There would be a juxtaposition of the popular/familiar with a few "off-the-wall" presentations that are good, striking attractions that the audiences don't necessarily know they want to see, yet find they can't be missed. Partnerships with local summer concert presenters "Shoreline Showcase" and "Roots on the River" could

headline the series with jazz and bluegrass concerts. Other acts/attractions would be sought in conjunction with other area theatres to minimize fees and expenses, but would strive to address a variety of community entertainment interests. Some programming may come from other sources as suggested later in this report. The series would not attempt to compete directly with the type of acts currently headlining at the Casino, though financial sponsorship support would be sought from that organization.

Most performances would be scheduled for weekend nights, but other nights may be possible for certain attractions. Thursdays, in particular, are becoming more recognized as an extension of the weekend. Most attractions would be selected to appeal to a mature age demographic to take advantage of those individuals' numbers in the community as well as their financial status which allows more discretionary income spending for ticket purchases and the potential for contributions to The Ramsdell.

Besides the challenge of selecting interesting and attractive entertainments that will draw audiences to The Ramsdell and reflect positively on the organization, there is the additional challenge of assuming financial risk to do so. Sponsorships, including media sponsors to aid promotion efforts, would be sought for the series as well as individual events. Further, to avoid any unpleasant experiences as the first season progresses, out-of-pocket costs for the programs, including artists' fees, production and promotion expenses, would be fully recoverable with only 50% paid attendance, i.e., a \$20 ticket price for half the house would limit total expense to around \$5,000 to be recovered by ticket sales and sponsorships. This would be an average for the six shows so that there could be a better mix of entertainers overall by splitting \$30,000 with some shows costing more than \$5,000 and some less.

### Attending Arts Exhibits and Performances

One in three adults attended an art museum or a live arts performance in the 12 months ending in May 2008. About 35 percent of all U.S. adults — or 78 million Americans — visited an art museum or gallery or attended at least one of six types of the "benchmark" arts events tracked since 1982.

- About 23 percent of all adults visited an art museum or gallery.
- Musicals drew 17 percent of all adults, and nonmusical plays drew 9 percent.
- About 9 percent of adults attended classical music.
- Relatively fewer adults attended jazz (8 percent), ballet or other dance (7 percent), Latin or salsa music (5 percent), and opera (2 percent).



Theatre offerings, both film exhibition and live performances, require constant scrutiny and evaluation to ensure they are attracting the number of people and quality demographics necessary to sustain cash flow and return profits. Metrics used to measure this include:

- Attendance
- Increased repeat attendance
- Net income per program
- Favorable reviews
- Word on the street
- More live shows
- Increased diversity

Experiences in similar facilities have confirmed the possibility of **partnering** with individual promoters and organizations to further expand offerings at The Ramsdell or reduce expense on a series presentation. On the **commercial** side, net income splits are possible and could provide The Ramsdell with attractions at minimal risk. Some promoters may be interested in a simple rental agreement to present a show, but that is less likely. Most “popular” acts may be more easily booked through co-promotions with qualified promoters.

On the **not-for-profit** side, The Ramsdell should strive to be an affordable rental facility while charging fair rates for services and partnering in promoting desirable events. To do this, The Ramsdell should recognize a select group of local organizations, including educational institutions, as “Prime Partners” for special attention, pricing and promotional opportunities. Potential “Prime Partners” would include West Shore Community College for its presentation series, the Red Cross and Rotary. Actual costs and perks will vary by organization and their needs, but they will be organizations that have a good history in the community, bring in quality audiences and performances, and generally contribute a positive image. Further, The Ramsdell would be recognized as a sponsor for any value given. For instance, the facility would be reimbursed for all out-of-pocket costs but charge no rent in lieu of recognition as a co-presenter.

As the series is established and audiences again look to The Ramsdell for regular entertainments, a **variety of single night music and comedy attractions** could be added to balance out the programming throughout the year and attract different audiences. The number and variety of attractions that could be brought in is limited only by the community’s tastes and desires and the limited space, technical capabilities and income potential of the facility. Current situations at the time will dictate who is available and affordable when the Theatre is available. Programs could be presented as “ad hoc” events or organized in on-going series based on their genre, i.e., “Comedy Night at The Ramsdell,” etc.

Another over-arching theme/series could be developed with musical genres. Depending on how the partnerships develop with the summer presenters in the first year, two mini-series spaced out over the year, each with a special focus, might help anchor and bring a higher purpose to the offerings while providing opportunities to become a community leader with additional learning opportunities. Series might include:

**Jazz**, presented in a three- or four-concert series, could play an important part in The Ramsdell’s programming due to its appeal to an older demographic and the strong history of jazz performance at the First Beach concerts. Presentations could include nationally and internationally recognized artists drawn from an array of jazz stalwarts.





Local and regional musicians will be used in supporting roles to open for and augment these artists. There are additional opportunities for partnerships with local schools and the bigger festivals in the area.

The Ramsdell would not attempt to compete directly with established **classical** presenting and performing organizations in the area such as Interlochen by presenting a significant series of such music but, within the eclectic mix of events scheduled, could bring in a variety of artists in another mini-series of three or four concerts that offer unique perspectives on the genre and that have an appeal to a public beyond the normal symphony attendee. Such concerts also bring opportunities for learning programs and outreach to local schools.

Themed or otherwise connected offerings that could include **both film and live presentations** are another possibility, as they offer opportunities to fully utilize the facility while helping to promote a commitment to learning. One such combination might invite Keir Dullea and his wife, Mia Dillon, for a residency that would include showings of Keir's major film, "2001, A Space Odyssey," as well as showings of his other films, "Bunny Lake is Missing," with Laurence Olivier, and "Butterflies are Free;" a showing of Mia's performance in "Our Town" with Paul Newman; discussions at all showings with Keir, Mia and local film buffs; and live performances on stage by Keir and Mia in *Love Letters* or, possibly, *The Gin Game*, a popular, Tony Award-winning play by D. L. Coburn. Other possibilities exist with different stars.

Some theatres have had good success presenting **travelogues and lectures** in partnerships with local service organizations or educational institutions. Such arrangements are usually done on a rental basis or in a co-sponsor situation as discussed above in the non-profit section.

Another possibility with minimal expense is presentation of **military bands and ensembles** that might be touring the area. Though tours are not as frequent as in the past, local congressional delegates can help encourage including Manistee on their itineraries.

Finally, in all of the various presentations, attention should be given to **exploiting the facility's historical legacy in programming that reflects various periods in the building's history**. Research into local archives should help identify music, films and entertainers who were especially important to Manistee area residents during The Ramsdell's early years, providing ideas for programs in this area. Programs might also be combined or organized together, such as a Bette Davis "**festival**" including showings of her most famous films along with a production of the play, *Me and Jezebel*, by Elizabeth Fuller. Besides the films and play performances, Ms. Fuller brings a collection of Davis memorabilia which could be exhibited in Hardy Hall or elsewhere in the community. She could also talk about her experiences with Bette Davis at several events, sign copies of her books, and present a reading of her new musical play, *A Very Bette Christmas – The Lost Bette Davis TV Special*.

Other possibilities might include the Bay City-based Bijou Orchestra, led by Leo Najar, and dedicated to performing music from the Vaudeville and movie house orchestras that proliferated across America in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It's a 13-piece ensemble with an interesting and eclectic repertoire. As part of the historical focus and the film initiative, they might accompany a showing of the classic "Metropolis" by Fritz Lang, which they did at the Traverse City Film Festival. They also offer other programs that would appeal to local audiences. One, in particular, focuses on the impact of ragtime on a variety of important composers. It's an entertaining as well as educational program.



## Film Exhibition

Constructed before the advent of the film industry, The Ramsdell was built without a projection booth. That omission was rectified later in its history, only to be removed and replaced with the current light booth. This should not preclude the showing of films today, as they are as important a form of entertainment now as they were in The Ramsdell's early years, and any retrospective look back is not complete without the inclusion of the film industry. Adding a projector to the light booth would not be a problem as digital projection can be easily added and supported with The Ramsdell's electrical system. Add a full, retractable screen framed by the ornate proscenium and audiences can pretend the "good old days" of film exhibition are back, along with that movie "magic" that takes people away from everyday realities whenever they enter the Theatre – a real "feel good" experience.

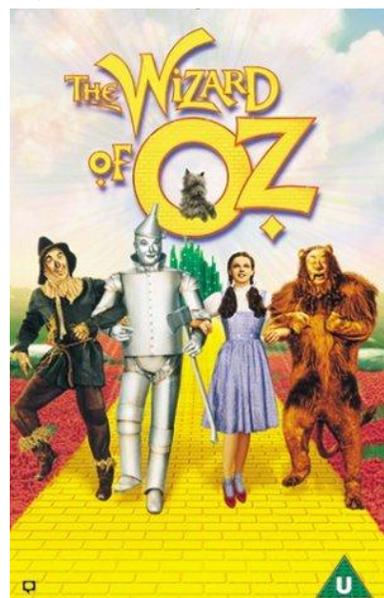
National studies by Arbitron indicate moviegoers are typically more upscale, more technically savvy, and better educated than the general population. They also participate in a more active lifestyle, pursuing sports, hobbies and other entertainments in numbers exceeding the general population. The same studies found that movie going is something people like to do together, and that approximately 90% of all recent attendees view the experience as a communal, bonding activity. Though frequency of attendance by individuals with these attributes had higher numbers for attendees under age 35, and were particularly strong in the 18-24 age demographic, the appeal of classic and art films skews to a more mature audience. These older age ranges, however, were still consistently strong and are supported by significant attendance frequency numbers.

The organization does not intend to compete with first-run films in the multiplexes. Rather, the digital projection will allow for regular scheduling of **classic films**, intermingled with more



**current art-house, independent, foreign, and documentary films** that aren't available in the immediate area. With its stunning décor and attached gallery, The Ramsdell can provide the kind of experience the mature filmgoer is seeking, and create a regular flow of a highly desirable demographic into the facility while providing more net income opportunities. To build interest in the showings, films would be regularly scheduled on a specific night and, possibly, promoted as the "Film Club." Showings could be regularly augmented by discussions with film critics, experts and "buffs," and may be organized into a series as a retrospective of a director's or actor's work or some specific genre of film. The marketing

would attempt to draw in people with a specific interest in classic and art films. Building camaraderie among attendees would be an important aspect of the showings, and a learning opportunity could be offered with materials offering more extensive information on the films, their actors and directors, along with critical reviews and other interesting tidbits. Consideration should be given to utilizing a recognized classic/independent film buyer/curator to select and acquire films to minimize staff work. Costs of presentation are frequently as low as \$250, which is





easily covered by admissions, so the concessions provide good net revenue. Hardy Hall or the new rathskeller could also offer a special place for these audiences to congregate and discuss.

One special possibility might be to partner with WSCC for their film appreciation class. A program in Jackson with their community college brought the class into the theatre there every Monday evening for a semester to study film. As part of each class, a classic film that best demonstrated the evening's lesson or was otherwise related was shown following the class portion. The full showing was mandatory for the students but open to the public for the price of admission and the cost of films was split with the college.

**Mainstream, current films** could also be included on a more limited basis. Several times a year, a hot, "buzz" film could be picked up for a limited run after its first two weeks of play around the country. Costs of presenting main stream, current films have leveled off in recent years from as much as 90% for the first week with rates declining for each subsequent week to a blended rate that pays the distributors approximately 55% of ticket sales for the entire run. Disney is at 60%. Unfortunately, that means a third week pickup which used to be at 35% or 40% is now more expensive.



Another possibility is to present a special series of **films geared to children and families** offered in early afternoons or late mornings on Saturdays and/or Sundays. These would be scheduled on a regular, monthly basis, and targeted to elementary school aged children and their parents. Film selection would be G- or PG-rated, chosen from lists of best films for children and recent popular children's attractions. It would not include first-runs. The showings could include some live activity or guest artist preceding the film. Birthday parties would be solicited, and pricing would be very family friendly. As part of the package, a participatory "club" could be organized that would include special activities, learning programs, and other perks to encourage visiting The Ramsdell and attending film showings. Special showings of these films could also be marketed to schools and other groups for daytime showings during the school year or as special nighttime fundraisers for school organizations.



The recent success of 10 West and other local filmmakers suggests there is also an opportunity to **encourage local filmmakers with opportunities for showings and discussions**. Hometown premieres, festivals, and filmmaking workshops and seminars are among many possibilities to augment The Ramsdell's regular features. Joint scheduling with other facilities and organizations would increase the scope and appeal of such activities.



Another new trend that offers additional revenue possibilities for The Ramsdell is **beaming in live events**. Movie theatres around the country have turned to live event screenings to fill seats and open new revenue streams by showings ranging from ultimate fighting to opera and Broadway musicals. Harnessing the latest digital technology, programming includes such entertainments as broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons and live concerts from groups like the Black Eyed Peas, whose March 30, 2010, show at Staples Center was transmitted live to 500 movie theatres. Also recently was the "Bold & Fresh Tour: O'Reilly and Beck," a big-screen telecast of political commentary by Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck. Of course, the biggest attraction is major sporting events such as the BCS Championship series or the Final Four. The Garden Theatre in Frankfort recently added this capability and debuted with a full-house for the Michigan-MSU football game last fall; and the State Theatre in Traverse City is presenting the Super Bowl and the Academy Award Presentations.



Pricing for these events varies. Some require ticket prices as high as live performances – in the \$20 range or higher. Depending on licensing, some sporting events need to be presented at no charge, relying on concession sales as the only revenue.

Equipping The Ramsdell for regular film and broadcast showings is not an inexpensive proposition, nor is it outrageous. A 1080p high def projector with 6,000 lumens, including a 20-foot motorized retractable screen and Blu-Ray DVD player is approximately \$30,000. Replacing the motorized screen with a fixed one reduces the cost by about \$1,200. Upgrading the sound system for stereo adds another \$4,000, and a control system that operates from either the stage manager position or sound board is another \$4,000. The sound system upgrade would also be a big help for live performances. For video presentation in other parts of the facility, a large-screen HD TV with Blu-Ray DVD player would probably suffice if the screen was big enough.





## **Vogue Theatre Update**

Though some of the previous film recommendations were suggested as an interim measure while The Vogue was being restored over a multi-year period, it has become evident that first-run mainstream film may return to Manistee within the year, along with a mix of art house and independent films. This does not suggest that The Ramsdell abandon all film programming, as it plays an important role in the overall programming mix and efforts to build broad community appeal and revenues.

Depending on the final Vogue construction schedule, The Ramsdell would not attempt to compete with first-run films nor the eclectic mix of art-house and independent offerings expected to be available at The Vogue. However, The Ramsdell could complement the newly opened Vogue and support its own programs by offering showings of classic and older children's films along with a mix of live broadcasts and local filmmaker initiatives. Special interest documentaries and travelogues could also fill dates at the Theatre. It has also been suggested that, depending on the potential for the balcony second screen at The Vogue, mainstream first-run films might move from The Vogue to The Ramsdell following their opening week for a limited run to open screen space for other offerings. Film festivals have also been discussed with The Ramsdell suggested as an additional venue for the films offered.

The expedited schedule also reintroduces the prospect of shared management or, at least, a collaborative venture to maximize revenues for both organizations while reducing administrative and program costs.



## Concessions

Many historic theatres around the state have realized the value and income potential of providing concessions and “adult beverages,” and allowing food and drink to be brought into the seating area. Key among these is the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor, which is equal to the Ramsdell in the quality of its renovation. Though not critical to the financial success nor desired for some programs, popular music attractions, film and live broadcasts almost demand the availability of such offerings. It’s hard to imagine that a crowd coming to see the Super Bowl on the big screen is going to be content going to the drinking fountain between quarters. It also puts The Ramsdell at a distinct disadvantage with facilities showing the same fare, while providing the only potential revenue from some showings as admission cannot be charged for certain offerings. And what’s a movie without popcorn?

The arguments for food and drink causing damage to the theatre are not without some merit, but the seats are upholstered in stain resistant fabric that is meant to withstand some abuse. Spills on the floor are also possible, but not a significant problem if proper packaging is used and the floors are treated with a special finish to facilitate cleaning. The added revenue easily covers the extra staff time to clean up after performances. Cupholders are also a possibility to help prevent spills, as they can be mounted from the arm rest in front, but they might be too intrusive visually and physically due to some tight spacing between rows.

Concession income can be a significant factor for many shows. Per person sales can easily reach \$3.50 with beer and wine sales even higher. These numbers would be lower if limited to pre-show and intermission sales with the food and drink not allowed in the seating area.

The **club liquor license** is recommended for its low cost, less than \$500, and it’s potential to form the basis of an expanded membership program. Requiring “membership” to purchase a drink is a good fundraising tool used in several theatres in the state. Even The Ark, a music venue in Ann Arbor presenting over 200 nights per year, is a non-profit and uses the membership requirement for its sales. Typically, a minimum membership of \$50 per year allows purchase at any event for the term of the membership for the named member and a spouse or guest. For “ad hoc” visitors, a one-month membership is available for \$5 for the named member and a spouse or guest. There are certain governance rules required by the law, but these are easily dealt with. The recommended body to maintain the license is the Friends of the Ramsdell. Liability insurance and special training are required, but experience suggests the club license liability levels and the circumstances of the limited sales keeps the rates low.

The club license provides for full liquor service including Sunday sales if that option is purchased. For theatre programming, beer and wine should be sufficient. The license could also be used, however, for events in the ballroom and add another income dimension to those rentals. In that case, having full bar service available would be beneficial.

Though the proposed rathskeller is expected to provide a good location for sales for theatre programs, for events like live broadcasts of sporting events and some children’s programs that may be particularly concession-oriented, it may be prudent to identify an **alternate venue within the facility** to minimize any food related damage or allow for multiple use if the Theatre is occupied. Depending on MAI usage, Hardy Hall might be the most feasible, but the ballroom or a large classroom might also be useful. Furnished with comfortable seating and/or tables and chairs, the internet connection could easily feed a smaller projector and screen, or simply a large, flat screen TV, in either area. Such a venue could become a popular, cozy place to watch



certain programs and provide additional revenues, especially for smaller crowds that would be dwarfed in the larger theatre.

Equipping the service should not require excessive costs. An ice machine is probably the most important item and starts at about \$1,500 depending on capacity. Whether one in a central location is sufficient would need to be reviewed. Popcorn machines are priced in the \$2,000 - \$3,000 range for facilities of similar size and, for the ballroom sales, it might be good to have a portable bar and a keg-style beer cooler. (Bottle sales would be all that is necessary in the rathskeller, but this would also require a refrigeration unit.) The keg beer cooler is probably in the \$2,000 range and an Architectural Series Portable Bar with real wood and a period look could be at least \$8,000, though a skirted banquet table with ice in tubs would also work.

**Concession pricing** is the most criticized aspect of theatre attendance, and not without cause. Popcorn currently ranges from \$5.40 up to \$7.85 with drinks from \$3.95 to \$5.30 in Ludington. A bottle of water is \$3.85 – almost the cost of a case! Some of these prices were as high if not higher than a Detroit-area theatre that was also surveyed. The Garden Theatre in Frankfort was more reasonable with popcorn and drinks between \$2.00 and \$5.00 for different sizes.

Recent national surveys suggest growing interest in more healthful concession offerings for both snacks and drinks, with Disney actually requiring it for certain kid-centric films. Surveys also suggest demand for a few “fancier” snacks and the availability of beer and wine.

Additional research and surveys of available foods will help define the final menu, but offerings should definitely include familiar, “old-time,” movie theatre fare to further the classic film experience. Additionally, beer and wine should be available at a separate bar to take into the theatre. Prices would be:



Drinks	
Small	\$2.50
Medium	\$3.50
Large	\$4.50
Popcorn	
Small	\$3.50
Medium	\$4.50
Large	\$5.50
Candy	\$2.00 to \$3.00

Beer and wine, including an assortment of local/regional  
beers and wine by the glass \$4.00 to \$7.00



Additionally, there can be combined offerings of drinks and snacks at some discount. Particularly messy offerings such as nachos should be avoided.



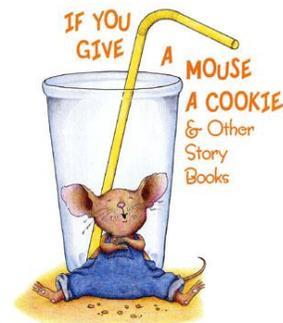
## Creative Learning Experiences

Key to enhancing the organization's acceptance as an important partner in the community will be its ability to provide value for the area's residents in the form of learning programs. Many studies point to the importance of exposure to or participation in arts activities for children at all stages of development. Such activity has been shown to have a direct impact that results in higher test scores, better overall grades, increased spatial reasoning and verbal skills, and reduced drop-out rates for at-risk youth. Besides how it enhances students' ability to master core curriculum subjects, discipline and motivation are key by-products of studying the arts.

The new "Community Arts Center" at The Ramsdell should be committed to developing innovative, cutting-edge learning programs and providing a variety of high caliber participatory activities and other opportunities for children of all ages to experience the performing and visual arts. Adults could be brought into the activities as well with a variety of opportunities to enhance life-long learning.

Initially, the learning aspects of the organization's offerings would revolve around the films and live entertainments presented, but could easily expand in partnerships with other area organizations, including the public schools. Many offerings would be fee based to cover costs and provide net revenue to the organization, while others would be no-cost or free add-ons to other programming. Early program offerings might include:

- Special theatre offerings chosen specifically for children and families such as those available from TheatreworksUSA (at right)
- Learning opportunities built into children's film offerings
- Adult learning opportunities built into the promotion, Web site content, and audience participation/discussion aspects of the "Film Club" and other performances
- Special lectures and other presentations, possibly including live performance
- Theatre camps/workshops for various age groups offered during the daytime in the summers utilizing the entertainers presenting the evening shows



Advocates of strong learning programs recognize that there are two ways to structure the educational content of an arts program:

- You can learn **IN** the arts: how to "do" them – to perform and create
- You can learn **ABOUT** the arts: how to understand and enjoy them

### Learning **IN** the arts

Programs for learning **IN** the arts could, initially, consist of the exploration and development of partnerships and special relationships with existing public and private learning programs and individuals, as well as utilization of the various performers and artists visiting The Ramsdell. Existing classes by Ingrid Bond would be an example of learning "in" the arts, as would possible workshops and classes presented by MCP and MAI. Summers could include week-long "day camps" exploring music, drama, dance or the visual arts for various age groups. These camps



could serve as an introduction and trial for students, drawing them into weekly sessions offered during the school year. A multi-week experience could even culminate in a student musical theatre presentation as many of the most popular Broadway shows are available in “junior” versions geared to younger talent. Such a program might even draw in the children of summer visitors if a popular director is involved.

Partnering with local college programs could also provide individual and class music lessons. The excellent music program in the Manistee Area Public Schools doesn't begin instruction until the sixth grade, while many students are ready for study as early as fourth grade, and some offerings even work for younger children. Examples of the latter are modified Suzuki programs for violin or piano which can work with children as young as three or four. Besides the public schools, the only music lessons offered in Manistee are at the Music House. There, they only offer piano, guitar and beginning violin. Lessons are \$17 per half hour, \$15 per lesson if there are two or more students from the same family. With little or no investment in pianos for the classrooms and music stands, MCAC could net from each lesson given. If participation warrants, small ensembles could be formed to further the learning experience. Adults are also a possible market for lessons as many want to pick up an instrument they enjoyed as a child and see if they can still do it. Experiences in other facilities suggest they also enjoy performing little “recitals” for their peers.



An example of utilizing visiting artists presented at The Ramsdell would be to include a master class or workshop by the artist for local students. Depending on the artist, these activities are easily added on to a contract at little or no cost and can also help promote the appearance. Even something as simple as a “meet and greet” or post concert discussion that doesn't include a particular lesson can be a learning experience and inspiring for younger students.

### **Learning programs ABOUT the arts would have a dual focus:**

#### **Learning ABOUT the arts - Early childhood**

Most critical for the community, and unique in the normal operations of a facility such as the Community Arts Center, could be a focus on early childhood learning, with a commitment to helping all children realize their unique inner strengths at a time when the child's developmental factors are most receptive. Many studies demonstrate that the arts are particularly helpful in this process. Children that develop high levels of autonomy, initiative, and direction through participation in these programs, possess the tools to be happy, productive, altruistic, responsible, creative, spontaneous, and inner-directed individuals.

Though many offerings in the near future could contribute to early childhood development, full implementation of this initiative requires extensive research, planning and preparation, and may not be operational for several years. One potential program might be feasible earlier since most of the classroom space is available during the school day – a creative arts preschool. Including a variety of arts activity geared to the preschooler, programs like this are both popular and profitable as many parents seek the best opportunities for their children's development.



## **Learning ABOUT the arts - All ages**

As the early childhood initiative is developed, the Community Arts Center could focus significant attention on creating strong, imaginative programs that give a broader cross-section of people an opportunity to learn **ABOUT** the arts. Combining work being done by John Steinmetz about stimulating human interaction with and through music, and the Lincoln Center Institute's concept of aesthetic education, this "other dimension" in arts learning would include innovative, cutting-edge activities for adults, children and families that serve a growing community need and help further the organization's mission.

Activities in this program would take many shapes and forms and may play some role in all programming in The Ramsdell. Concerts and theatre events specifically for young persons would be part of this program's focus for children, as, to a limited extent, would programs geared to young adults. Pre-concert discussions and program notes, their form and content, would also be part of this initiative. Exhibits in the gallery relating to the Theatre programming would be pursued. Possible collaboration with colleges and universities in the presentation of adult-oriented learning programs would be explored, as would many other possibilities.



## Ballroom Usage

Recent promotions with Heather Hendrickson of Grand Prize Weddings have been helpful in advertising the benefits of the ballroom as a wedding site, and this business has increased in recent years. Unfortunately, the lack of air conditioning has limited the use in the summer months – the prime wedding season. Plans are in place to remedy this problem and it is anticipated that continued and expanded efforts could make the ballroom a popular site for not only weddings, but proms and other gatherings. The facility is particularly attractive with its large fireplace and chandeliers, and the availability of a well-equipped caterer's kitchen and seating for 292 at tables add to its appeal.

Financially, a full-out wedding can bring the facility over \$1,500. Providing liquor service could further increase this revenue, and consideration of instituting an agreement with caterers would add even more. An agreement used in a similar facility included the following:

### Preferred Caterer Agreement

- All clean-up has occurred immediately following the event.
- All items related to the event have been removed from the property.
- Arrangements for any items to be picked-up after the event have received prior approval and coordination by the Events Manager.
- All trash cans are to be emptied and bags placed in the dumpster located \_\_\_\_\_. Trash liners are provided.
- Kitchen floor must be swept and mopped. Cleaning supplies are provided.
- All counters have been wiped clean. Cleaning supplies are provided.
- All convectional appliances should be cleaned if used.
- All appliances, exhaust fan and air conditioner should be turned off.
- The refrigerator, freezer, hot box, ovens and microwave are available for use.
- All facility-owned cookware, table settings and utensils are restricted for use without prior consent from the Events Manager.
- Water and ice are available.
- All flames must be enclosed.
- A bartender provided by the facility must serve all alcohol. Self serve bars are not permitted.

**Payment: Please send 15% of your gross food sales to \_\_\_\_\_**

Most caterers did not object to this agreement and simply added the cost to their customer's bill.



## Facilities

The Plans currently in place for the facility seem capable of supporting the programming recommended above. One concern might be the loss of the dance studio in the northeast corner of the stage level. It currently provides a wood floor for the dancers while adding “overflow” backstage space for large cast productions. The proposal to move dance study downstairs to a concrete-floored room is not recommended for more mature dancers, especially those “en pointe” and those doing leaps and lifts. Even the laying of a special Roscoe dance floor will not alleviate the underlying hardness, nor will it make the ceiling tall enough for certain moves.

This problem might be mitigated somewhat by the availability of the ballroom for occasional class sessions for the more mature dancers. The large space and floor offers the opportunity for teachers to “spread out” and really challenge the dancers with longer and more complicated combinations as well as more partnering work.

Another way to make more space available more often is to restrict MCP rehearsal and set-building usage. The first week of rehearsals for each show could be held in Hardy Hall or the ballroom, probably the latter as it would be easy to mark off the stage’s actual size. Likewise, set construction could begin in an off-site location. WSCC has recently added a well-equipped scenic studio which ought to be available for the co-productions. The Players also need to be encouraged to keep the space they use neat and professional looking with a complete load-out and stage restore at the completion of each production.

To fully utilize the facility, some additional consideration should be given to security and access to Hardy Hall. Currently, there is not a good way to have only that portion of the building open to the public. Also, there should be a way to use that room without concern for the paintings or other exhibits so that it might serve as a large classroom or gathering place when not hosting exhibits, or even simultaneously if security arrangements can be made to protect the art.

Seating problems created in the renovation need attention to increase the sale-ability of those seats and provide more comfortable accommodations for audiences. Code dictates a 12” span from the end of the armrest to the seat back in front. Many rows in that area are separated by as little as 9”. American Seating has laid out a plan to re-install those seats to provide additional spacing within the current riser set up and no loss of seating capacity. Their installer will do the work as a direct bill without any corporate markup. Cost is expected to be about \$3,000.

Finally, the brass railings have become a janitorial nightmare that can only become worse with additional performances in the facility. The time required from the staff to maintain their appearance does not seem proportionate to the historical value or appearance. Either less needs to be expected or some other remedy explored so that custodial staff can attend to more pressing issues in the building. Early descriptions of The Ramsdell suggest there was curtaining on some railings. Maybe this could be done in some places, leaving only the end posts to be maintained.



## **III. MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

- A. Overview**
- B. Identity and Branding**
- C. Advertising**
- D. Pricing**
- E. Public Relations and Promotions**
- F. Sense of Occasion**
- G. Marketing Administration**

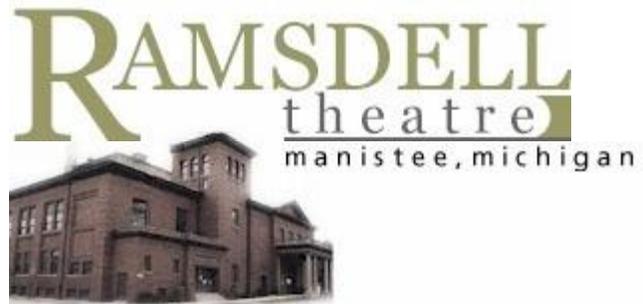


## Overview

It's difficult to fully assess previous marketing efforts relative to new programming because of the limited activity historically. Likewise, there is nothing to be gleaned from MCP activity as they barter and trade with both newspapers and radio stations and don't fully control content or placement. They also spend little money – probably no more than \$500 per show. It does appear that their radio choices are consistent with what is revealed in the Tapestry Profiles, however, that may also be a product of what stations are in the market and not a conscious choice. The newspaper is particularly supportive with pre-show coverage beyond advertising, but it's not clear if their subscription base fully reaches potential markets.

MCP staff did indicate that they seemed to get better attention when they had a large sign on the north side of the building, and they also felt that the partnering with WSCC got them more attention, partly because they were able to work with the college's media list. West Shore does maintain a quality, professional staff and it shows.

The programming recommendations further complicate the picture. The focus on the larger facility along with new programming in the Theatre and elsewhere throughout the facility calls into question the use of the current logo and the "Historic Ramsdell Theatre" tagline. It could even be argued that the "theatre" designation is inappropriate in the building's title as it is actually just a part of the larger complex, though any attempt to make such a change would be thwarted by the long, historical usage of the name throughout the community.



In short, it is essential that the organization design, execute and maintain an effective Marketing Plan sufficient to meet financial and attendance goals that:

- Maximizes the number and variety of Ramsdell Theatre audiences
- Projects a fresh, visionary brand identity to drive sales
- Communicates the organization's role in, and benefit to, the community
- Positions the organization for growth into the future



## Identity and Branding

In spite of the long, historical usage of the Ramsdell Theatre name, it might be prudent to explore a revision in logo usage to emphasize the expanded role the organization hopes to play in the community. For instance, Music Hall in Detroit maintains an historic look to their logo, but includes a small, descriptive tagline:



Some similar “qualifier” such as “Manistee’s Community Arts Center” could be added without diminishing the historical integrity of the name or the look that has been used for so many years.

### Recommendations:

- Create a new and exciting identity/brand/image for The Ramsdell that helps establish the organization as a premium entertainment provider and gathering spot in the community – a first class venue, and an important historic facility
- Reinforce “The Ramsdell” name by separating the facility and its presentations from the Civic Players identity
- Assure that the organization delivers value equal to the promise the identity/image conveys or implies, as the “brand” reflects both the reputation and the integrity of the business
- Build “brand equity” at every point of public contact:
  - Reinforce brand positioning with a provocative “unique selling proposition” that expresses the product’s theme in an irresistible and memorable form
  - Provide materials at all points of customer contact to promote current and future offerings
  - Develop signage and other elements to support the new image



## Advertising

Advertising expense should be built into every program offering budget regardless of any media sponsorship secured. Packaging free time with a purchase broadens the frequency and reach while providing more control of the placement. The market target may change for each event and the mix needs to be flexible to reach the right people. For instance, some audiences are very computer/internet savvy while others are not, so the latter may require more radio, print or direct mail to be reached. A little “viral” advertising might also play a role in certain promotions.

### Recommendations:

- Invest in advertising and promotion to actively communicate marketing messages through an impactful, identifiable, and creatively designed campaign utilizing direct mail, print and electronic media advertising, program guides, posters, point-of-sale materials, Internet/Web site promotions and newsletters
- Drive interest and attendance to achieve sales goals and marketing objectives with unique communications that stand out from other advertising,
  - Build a “sense of specialness,” create a desire to be associated with the organization, and encourage active participation and frequent return visits by ensuring that the marketing campaign is exciting, clearly defined, refreshing, creative, dynamic, provocative, fresh, confident, professional, visionary, effective, skillfully executed, and representative of the emotions it is attempting to convey
  - Avoid allowing the organization to be perceived as elitist, esoteric, arrogant, staid, predictable, “same old, same old,” or “stuffy”
- Use the Web and social networking sites to convey the new image and marketing strategies and reach demographics that are particularly attuned to these media
  - Seek email addresses from all customers and expand e-marketing activities to best reach certain demographic targets at low cost
  - Provide incentives or rewards to encourage individuals to provide contact information such as a drawing from completed information cards
- Maximize opportunities provided by TREAT ticketing for on-line promotion



## Pricing

Though many residents have migrated to Manistee from larger cities to live, while others are just a summer visitor, their memory of what things cost seems to have stayed behind. With some exceptions in Traverse City and at the Casino, people seem resistant to “local” entertainments that are priced much beyond \$20 – regardless of the attraction! Residents who would think nothing of paying as much as \$100 for theatre seats or sporting event admissions in larger cities seem unwilling to do so in their hometown.

Pricing should reflect both the cost and value of the attraction, as a price too low seems to indicate it's not all that good. A favorite marketing book says: “Price is more than the quid pro quo for the service you provide. Like money, price talks. It changes perceptions. Price communicates the quality that purchasers can expect . . . Watch what your price says!”

At the Casino, tickets have ranged from \$10, \$15 and \$20 for some shows to as high as \$25, \$35 and \$45 for Tommy James. Travis Tritt was priced at \$30, \$45 and \$60, but others have not exceeded a \$25 top. Some of the “sell-outs” are a little misleading as members of the Players Club are provided free admissions as a perk and constitute a significant portion of the audience.

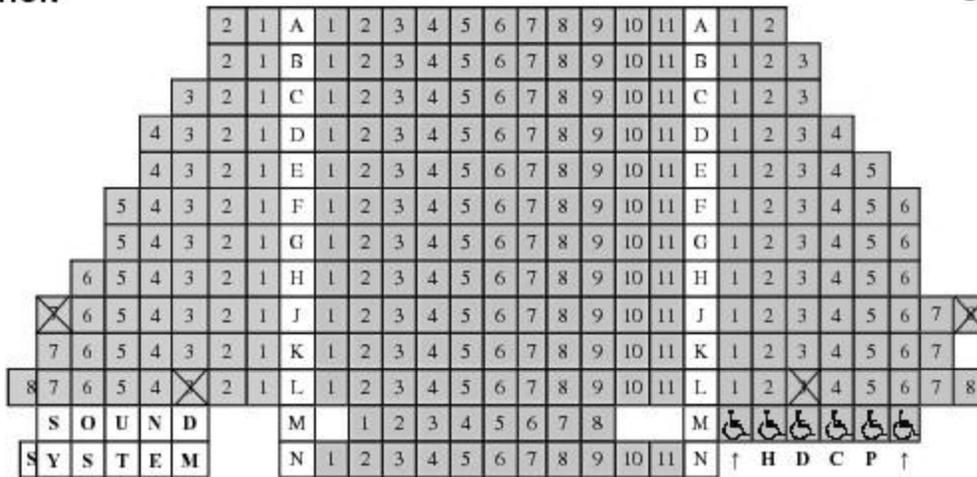
MCP has increased their prices to \$14 for the plays and \$20 for the musicals in their 2011 season. The \$1 fee for the endowment is inclusive, however, when you go on line to purchase from TREAT, the price is listed at \$13 or \$19 with the fee showing as an additional charge. This might be confusing to some and may affect the City's share of ticket revenues depending on the reporting format. It could probably be an add-on to the base price of \$14 or \$20 as many buyers are supportive of those types of fees that help fund an historic structure. They are usually less supportive of a *ticketmaster*-type charge imposed just for handling. TREAT does not add on their very reasonable fee of \$1.25 but charges it back to the presenter.

MCP also offers season ticket “coupons” at six for \$77, or \$12.83 per ticket to be used for any show in any quantity. This is a reasonable discount for the early in the year cash flow benefits to the organization when the coupon is used for a \$14 ticket, but it is extremely generous and depriving the City of revenue when used for a \$20 ticket. It is only an 8% discount on the \$14 ticket, but balloons to 36% off the \$20 ticket. Like single events, the season coupon should reflect the difference in pricing between the offerings. Additionally, the most desirable seats should not be discounted in any offer and, if not regularly priced at a premium level, should require a certain membership or contribution level from the buyer to be eligible to purchase in advance.

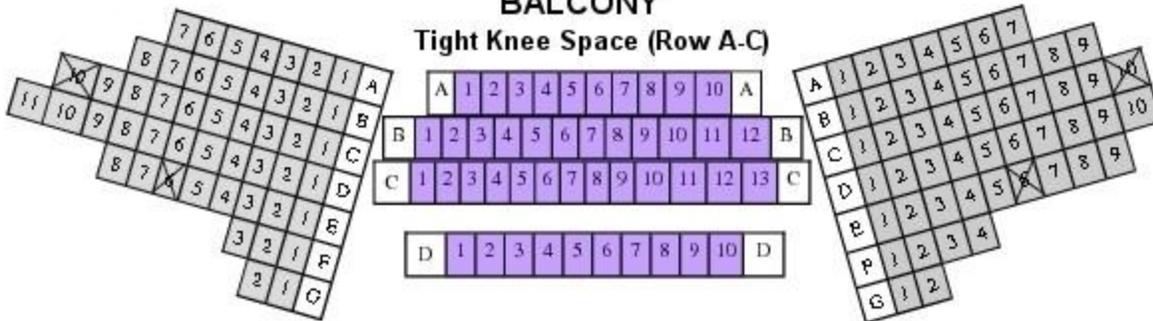
For the planned new programming, something in the \$20 range for quality live attractions seems right and should cover most production costs at less than full-house sales. However, there needs to be both higher and lower prices to balance out the attractiveness and increase revenues. The boxes on the main floor should be named for their original owners – the Ramsdells, Filers, etc. – and sold as such. These would be priced at \$30, but only in advance to those that are donors of at least \$100, while the majority of the center section on the main floor and the center section in the front of the balcony would be sold at \$25. Again, donors or members would have advance purchasing privileges for a certain time period prior to public sale, but this would be available to all members regardless of contribution level. Remaining seats would be sold at \$20, however, the second balcony would become the “Top Ten” – always available for \$10! Family shows would work on a different scale altogether.



# Proscenium Stage

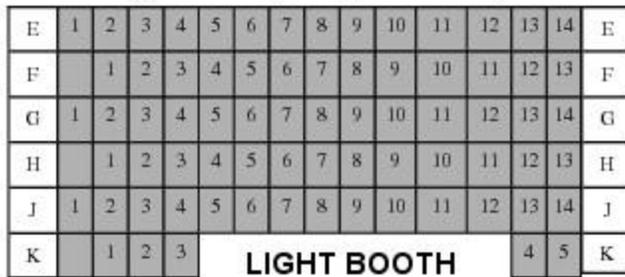


## BALCONY



## SECOND BALCONY

**Tight Knee Space (Past Row E)**





Film showings will work differently. At closing, The Vogue was selling tickets at \$5.75 for adults and \$5.00 for children 12 and under. It is believed that this was not for first-run films. The nearest theatres in Ludington and Frankfort currently charge \$8.00 for adults, with \$6.00 for children 12 and under in Frankfort and \$6.50 in Ludington. These are evening prices for the adults and all day prices for children, with the adult price in Ludington reduced to \$7.00 for matinees. Ludington also offers a special day-long senior price of \$5.75, but Frankfort does not. To have access to first-run features will require near these rates to satisfy distributors, however, classic films can be less.

Though there was great concern about high prices expressed in the initial brainstorming sessions for The Vogue study, a recent Facebook survey by the MSDDA seems supportive of higher prices with most respondents suggesting an \$8.00 to \$10.00 range. The overall average was \$8.45. With these reports in mind, **film ticket prices** are recommended as follows:

**First-run films** picked up sometime after opening weekend, or more current independent, art house offerings that are more current:

Adults age 13-64	\$7.50 evening \$7.00 matinee (before 6:00 p.m.)
Children age 3-12	\$5.00 all-day
Seniors age 65+	\$6.00 evening \$5.00 matinee
Reserved seats	\$2.50 additional or some sort of package price including concessions

The reserved seating will be in the center section on the main floor and upstairs in the front of the balcony.

For **classic films**, the price would probably be \$5 across the board, though a reserved seat might be offered as above. The **children’s series** could be as low as \$2 or some sort of all inclusive package price for the entire family.

**Recommendations:**

- Price competitively for both the community and the competition with a three-tier price structure that always maintains a limited number of seats at \$10 (or less)
- Be cautious and restrictive with age and other discounts to avoid devaluing the product and losing potential revenue from target audiences
- Encourage “perceived value” by aggressively pricing events and services in special seating sections to communicate the high quality of the venue and the programming
- Avoid unnecessary facility and handling charges added to ticket purchases; clarify historic facility fee for endowment as an add-on to realize the full ticket price for the presenter
- Investigate inclusive pricing with food and drink packages for both live entertainments and film showings



**Box Seats:**

- A – Ramsdell Box
- B – D. W. Filer Box
- C – E. Golden Filer Box
- D – Buckley Box



## Public Relations and Promotions

The MCP experience working with West Shore Community College's professional marketing staff suggests there is more to do than what is currently done. Staff qualifications and available time certainly affect the quantity and the quality of the effort. Regardless, there are many ways to help promote The Ramsdell's offerings that need time and effort to be successful.

### Recommendations:

- Develop a sustained public relations effort including media contact, cross promotions with other organizations, and community outreach activities
- Apply a consistent look, feel, and writing style to the collateral and press materials designed to communicate The Ramsdell message in the most dynamic and confident manner possible
- Promote ticket sales through partnerships and discount programs with major employers
  - Develop partnerships and shared marketing activities with restaurants and other local businesses
  - Package Theatre attendance with dining opportunities and other target-market-appropriate lifestyle perks involving local businesses

As the new programming initiative comes together, it might also be prudent to explore an event to promote the new activity while showing off some of the building enhancements. Such an event could even take the form of a **Grand Re-Opening**:

- Evaluate the scheduling of a Grand Re-Opening to promote the new program initiatives and welcome new customers into the facility
- Seek information about the 1903 opening and incorporate appropriate activities into the "re-opening"
- Schedule both free activities for all comers and a first-class, VIP, invitation only event to build interest and bring the community "on-board"



## Sense of Occasion

More frequently referred to as merchandising, “Sense of Occasion” is creating the “sense” that one is attending an “occasion” that is “not to be missed.” Developed, specifically, in the lobby and gallery, or, more generally, in attitude, it is a key ingredient in the marketing mix, the attractiveness of the venue, and the organization’s learning programs.

“The show starts on the sidewalk,” was the mantra of one of the great movie theatre architects of the last century, S. Charles Lee, who designed over three hundred movie palaces from the 1920s to 1950s. He put into his designs even more than what exists in the beautifully restored Theatre today. The Ramsdell is a “show” in itself, but a variety of things can also be done to start the “magic” of the experience as people enter the Theatre – and the atmosphere created can be a big plus in helping to retain audiences. The Ramsdell should create a variety of events, décor, and other point-of-purchase elements, designed to create an atmosphere that supports and heightens the “magical” experiences that occur on stage and screen. Possibilities include:

- Extensive use of historical or current movie posters and other film/theatrical art
- Ushers and staff dressed in period-appropriate uniforms
- Lobby displays and related amenities tied to the current attraction and providing interesting information
- Live entertainment in the lobby or in the gallery before the show
- Star impersonators or other characterizations
- Food or concession offerings tied to the current show
- Special parties with film showings, live entertainment, back stage tours, etc., to reward frequent attendees/donors and “sell” the theatre experience
- Open the MAI gallery for all performances to heighten the audience’s “sense of occasion” when attending events at The Ramsdell; offer special exhibits and other activities in the gallery that expand upon the presentations in the Theatre



## **Marketing Administration**

Providing quality staff and organization to the marketing effort will be difficult under the current structure. It will be important to try and establish a central source that promotes the new initiatives while assisting and coordinating the efforts of the current tenants to maximize their effectiveness. Volunteers with marketing backgrounds might be helpful with these efforts, or donated time from a local business could fill-in part of the need. Also, collaboration with MSDDA and other organizations promoting Manistee will be a must.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop a “nucleus of communication” for the entire organization to assure all staff and volunteers have access to, and knowledge of, all activities in the facility
- Develop prioritization and systems management to appropriately organize all records pertinent to advertising, press materials and marketing vendors
  - Assure easy access to press clippings and releases for all events
  - Display advertisements for each week’s activities for all staff, volunteers and visitors to see
- Ensure timely sales reporting to better evaluate campaign effectiveness and adjust strategies if necessary
- Review and evaluate staffing complement and capabilities to most effectively operate the marketing activities; seek interns, ad hoc or contract support if necessary and feasible



## **IV. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

- A. Overview**
- B. Finance**
- C. Governance**
- D. Management**



## Overview

The City of Manistee is currently responsible for all operating and maintenance costs of The Ramsdell, as well as the booking, billing, contracting and administration. Edward Bradford, Finance Director, oversees all operations with Heather Pefley from his staff, while Jon Rose, Community Development Director, or Mark Niesen, Building Inspector, are responsible for the physical structure. Two part-time employees handle the cleaning, site/event management and maintenance, each recently authorized to 120 hours per month. Six hours of event management are included in the rental rates with any additional time billed at \$15 per hour. The City recently spent \$450,000 for roof repairs out of their capital budget, and is currently working on design/engineering for an HVAC upgrade that would replace the recently failed boiler and air condition Hardy Hall and the ballroom to make it more rentable in the summer months. A seven-member Governing Authority appointed by the Council has fiduciary oversight.

Though the current enhanced condition of the facility is a testament to significant individual giving and government investment, maintaining The Ramsdell has become a topic of great discussion as the City struggles with declining revenues and related budget issues. The direct operating cost of \$100,000 is partially covered by the Manistee Civic Players paying 20% of their gross revenues for five productions per year, with other monies coming from the Manistee Art Institute's exhibit usage, the Ingrid Bond School of Dance, which has a studio in the building, and ballroom rentals, which can be as high as \$1,500 for a single wedding. This income has totaled \$35,000 in recent years, leaving the City responsible for \$65,000 from their general fund. Increased rentals and revenues from the Players will reduce that amount to \$60,000 for the current year, with an additional \$70,000 paid for the note on the roof and \$90,000 to move forward on the HVAC. City staff costs are not allocated into the total expense and are probably 1,200 hours per year or one FTE. Efforts are currently underway to create an endowment to help with ongoing restoration needs.

Recommendations previously outlined in this report suggest more, rather than less management is necessary, however, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the number and variety of the proposed activities and their net revenues, along with a well-designed fundraising program, can still relieve the City of its operational responsibilities with the hope of covering some capital obligations with grants and other contributions. To do so requires the following:

- Grow net income from theatre sponsored events sufficient to cover annual operating expenses each year
- Define and operate an effective grant and endowment program
- Establish and operate an effective donor management program
- Explore development of a case for securing funding via a special millage
- Design and maintain an effective organizational structure based on the current needs and strategic direction of The Ramsdell

Overall it is important to:

- Operate the organization in a manner that ensures artistic quality, program success, organizational integrity and responsible growth
- Provide a solid financial foundation and managerial leadership to support all activities
- Assure superior customer service to create a "special occasion" for every event



## Finance

A review of the last five years of operations of The Ramsdell demonstrates the difficulties and the “no-room-for-improvement” situation that is caused by a “status quo” operation. Except for a welcome increase in rent from MCP from just over \$18,000 in 2007 to around \$35,000 this past year, there have been no significant increases in other income, while new personnel expenses for maintenance added about \$25,000 in each year beginning in 2008. Other “ins” and “outs” including those for professional services, repairs and utilities over this same period have reduced the City’s outlay from \$100,000 in 2007 to its current \$65,000 level.

At the same time, the numbers also suggest possibilities for what could be as a new HVAC system better controls utility costs while new income streams start to fill the many open dates throughout the year. True, new activities will increase the need for additional management, but that should also help relieve the current City staff from that responsibility and free up time for their regular workloads.

The financial reporting is currently well maintained by the City Finance Director as specified in 253.04 of the Manistee Code of Ordinances and managed by the Governing Authority Board under 253.03 or that Ordinance.

### **Recommendations:**

- Manage the organization aggressively, pursuing a positive bottom line through cost effective programming and innovative thinking
- Assure balanced budgets with conservative, defensible income estimates and flexibility in the expenses
- Maintain financial records that adequately support the management process and staff in carrying out their fiduciary responsibilities
- Organize financial reporting and the chart of accounts in a functional format that best represents the organization’s operations while serving as a budgeting tool to ensure all costs are included in projections
- Evaluate handling of the accounting records, receiving monies, bill paying and cash disbursements to ensure proper safeguards and clean audit trails for all transactions and procedures

As programs are more clearly identified and decisions made, a more detailed budget for 2011 and beyond can be provided. Likewise, a donor solicitation program will be developed with the Friends in the forefront. At this time, two fund raising events are being considered as the primary activities – a formal dinner possibly held in conjunction with the Sleighbell Parade weekend as it was in the past (also reminiscent of Ramsdell’s opening ball in December, 1902), and an event involving decorated boats sometime in the summer season. Membership solicitations are expected to be handled more like ticket sales with a selection of perks to encourage participation. Higher end donors will be identified earlier and individually solicited.





# Financial History

City of Manistee Budget Worksheet Ramsdell Theatre	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2010 Projected	Dept Request	Manager Budget	Council Adopted	Year to Year Budget Difference	Percent Change
296 Ramsdell Theatre Fund											
AVAILABLE FOR DEBT SERVICE	\$2,885	\$1,571	\$2,118	\$16,569	\$0	\$11,965	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
998.000 Installment Purchase Interest						\$8,386	\$15,306	\$15,306	\$15,306	\$15,306	
TOTAL DEBT INTEREST	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,386	\$15,306	\$15,306	\$15,306	\$0	
OPERATING RESULT	\$2,885	\$1,571	\$2,118	\$16,569	\$0	\$3,579	-\$15,307	-\$15,307	-\$15,307	\$0	
TOTAL DEBT REPAYMENT						\$26,554	\$54,573	\$54,573	\$54,573		
SURPLUS/DEFICIT BEFORE CAPEX	\$2,885	\$1,571	\$2,118	\$16,569	\$0	-\$22,975	-\$69,880	-\$69,880	-\$69,880	\$0	
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES											
Theatre steps, bathroom access							\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000		
Theatre HVAC							\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000		
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$0	
CASH IMPACT BEFORE FINANCING	\$2,885	\$1,571	\$2,118	\$16,569	\$0	-\$22,975	-\$189,880	-\$189,880	-\$189,880	\$0	
Transfer from Capital Improvement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$34,940	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$0	
Transfer from Capital Improvement							\$69,880	\$69,880	\$69,880		
FINANCING SOURCES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$34,940	\$174,880	\$174,880	\$174,880	\$0	
FINAL CASH IMPACT	\$2,885	\$1,571	\$2,118	\$16,569	\$0	\$11,965	-\$15,000	-\$15,000	-\$15,000	\$0	
BEGINNING CASH & INV						\$27,569			\$39,534		
ENDING CASH & INV				\$27,569		\$39,534			\$24,534		



## **Governance**

Adopted by City Ordinance on November 1, 2005, a new Governing Board was authorized “to preserve the unique facility of the Ramsdell Theatre Civic & Cultural Center.” Not less than seven members were to be appointed by the Mayor from applicants. Those who “demonstrated or expressed genuine interest in the Center by active membership in the Manistee Civic Players, Manistee Arts Institute, Ramsdell Restoration Committee or Rotary” were to have some preference “to have a representative balance of such interest groups on the Board.” Spelled out in 253.03 of that Ordinance, their powers and duties include:

- Establish by-laws, to be approved by the City Council
- Establish and hold periodic meetings not less than once per month
- Elect Officers
- Hire, if appropriate, a Managing Director of the Center, to be approved by the City Council, which Director shall serve as an Ex Officio (Non-Voting) member of the Board
- To establish rules, regulations and rentals for the use of the Center and its facilities
- Make application and submit to the City of Manistee annual budget requests for operating and capital requirements of the Center
- Otherwise manage the affairs of the Center to secure its perpetual continuance, which may include fund raising events, grants and applications that may be available from or through the State of Michigan, the United States or private foundations

As part of their responsibilities they have struck agreements with the Civic Players and Art Institute for usage of the facility, and have directly managed other rentals through finance department staff.

In 2008, what had been the Ramsdell Restoration Committee was re-formed into the Friends of the Ramsdell. The objectives or purposes for which the corporation was formed are as follows:

- To obtain funds by solicitation and donations and all other available legal means for the primary purpose of endowing the Ramsdell Theatre and the secondary purpose of restoration and rehabilitation of the Ramsdell Theatre and Hall.
- To serve as the advisory board for the Ramsdell Theatre Endowment Fund at the Manistee County Community Foundation
- To work cooperatively with the Ramsdell Theatre Governing Authority to ensure the sustainability and preservation of the Ramsdell Theatre.

Any individual who makes a donation of money, assets, time, in-kind labor or other to the organization, as determined by the Board, may be deemed to have the status of “Friend” of the Ramsdell. Friends have no authority over the affairs of the organization.

With the bulk of the restoration fund raising complete, this seemed a logical transformation to continue to build support. However, the Board has expressed little interest in the type of fund raising necessary to support new activities, and many of the remaining restoration projects are not as easily solicited as there are no naming possibilities to entice donors, and the recession has turned many donors away from arts and capital projects to human service concerns.

### **Recommendation:**

- Utilize proposed new activity levels to encourage new leadership and bring members into the Friends organization to ensure active fundraising on behalf of The Ramsdell.



## Management

Initially, it will not be feasible or practical to bring in a complete new management team of qualified professionals to oversee the new programming initiatives. More realistically, contractors working as needed on specific projects overseen by another contractor reporting to the Governing Authority Board are going to be the most cost effective solution until more programs are established and community participation is assured. Some of these contractors are probably available in the community, while some will require a specific expertise that must be sought outside of Manistee. Outside of the City staff, MCP is the only organization with a paid staff member now in the facility. MAI and MCP rely heavily on volunteer participation of varying levels of professionalism. The City staff has done an outstanding job of managing the facility – especially in regard to maintenance of the calendar and rentals of the ballroom. This work will need to continue in the short term, but more of an on-site presence will be necessary as activities increase. This can still be part-time as most activity is in the evening or after school hours. Other paid staff currently working in the building do not appear up to the new tasks.

### Recommendations:

- Provide a committed management team of high quality, experienced professionals to manage the business of the organization – visionary thinkers, intelligent and creative
- Provide competitive compensation and benefits; reward outstanding performance appropriately
- Aggressively pursue desirable candidates for staff openings; work diligently to retain existing staff members
- Evaluate staffing levels and needs to better meet organizational demands; seek interns, ad hoc or contract support if necessary and feasible

### Recommendations – Customer Service/Audience Experience:

- Exceed customers' and patrons' expectations for quality service and create a special experience for every visit
- Evaluate the “experience” of visiting The Ramsdell from the customer's perspective and assure the “path” from arrival to departure is totally satisfying and a “special occasion” that contributes to many return visits and exclamatory “word-of-mouth” endorsements
- Assure understanding and committed “buy in” of all staff and volunteers to guarantee extraordinary service
- Enhance the appearance of all technical and front of house personnel with consistent uniform requirements and apparel standards; seek historical uniforms consistent with period of Theatre's construction for front of house personnel
- Adequately staff box office with experienced, customer service oriented individuals to ensure fast and friendly sales and ticket handling; recognize the importance of the ticket office as the first line of public contact and exposure to the organization
- Establish minimum security requirements for all events to assure customer safety and appropriate handling of any crowd control issues
- Enhance volunteer training to assure friendly, consistent and correct responses to all audience needs and superior service
- Evaluate parking availability and signage directing traffic to available lots; utilize security personnel to help direct traffic and ensure public safety
- Provide additional bar/concession locations in addition to the rathskeller to maximize revenue and ensure all customers are served in the limited times allotted
- Review and ensure all signage directing patrons to various services is consistent with the historical character of the facility



### **Recommendations – Operations/Rentals**

- Review rental and related costs to ensure they adequately reflect expenses incurred and provide competitive rates while recognizing the venue's "first class" amenities not available elsewhere in the community
- Discourage "refundable" deposits and make all deposits "non-refundable" to better reflect the potential for a lost revenue opportunity and discourage frivolous holding of dates that deter other renters
- Initiate a program for non-profit "Prime Partners" that recognizes ongoing relationships with select community partners that includes special amenities and promotions in return for recognition as contributing "in-kind" to the organization
- Require any ticketed rental events to be operated through The Ramsdell's box office or TREAT to ensure accurate handling and accounting and avoid mistakes that might reflect badly on the organization
- Review all contracts for building usage to assure inclusion of current policies and fees; provide complete and accurate expense estimates to all renters with contracts to avoid conflicts and disagreements over charges included on the post event invoices
- Assure prompt response and acknowledgement to rental inquiries; provide friendly, informed and extraordinary service to all rental customers

### **Recommendations – Operations/Concessions/Bar**

- Develop concession costs and catering fees to maximize revenue, provide additional net income, and remain competitive with other entertainment facilities
- Ensure consistent "pours" and appropriate contents for costs and pricing
- Review suppliers and costs to assure a quality product at a reasonable price
- Evaluate unique items including those from local franchises that help distinguish The Ramsdell's offerings from the competition

### **Recommendations – Volunteers**

- Establish and maintain a comprehensive Volunteer Manual including procedures, scheduling, behavior and appearance guidelines, expectations, etc.
- Develop an effective college and high school intern/community service program

### **Recommendations – Technology**

- Develop and maintain the capability of providing a quality film experience based on competitive technological standards
- Establish and maintain an effective computer system for The Ramsdell
- Enhance the live performance capability by \_\_\_\_ via stage technical upgrades for lighting, sound, rigging, control systems, etc.

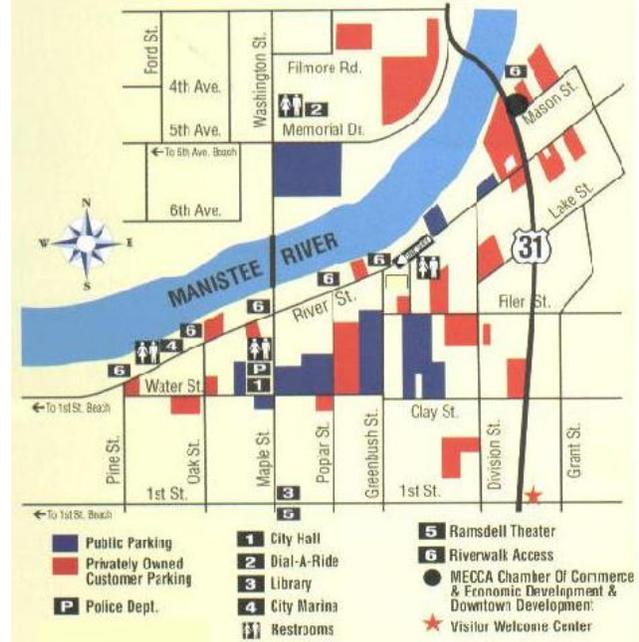
### **Recommendations – Parking**

Parking for the facility can be problematic, especially during inclement weather or when events are particularly well-attended. There is some on-street parking in the immediate vicinity, as well as the church parking lot to the east and the library lot to the north; however, the latter two's availability is dependent on the time of day or day of the week. Beyond these immediate resources, there is ample parking available in city-owned lots at Maple and Water Streets – a short, but arduous walk away. To encourage greater use of the city lots while making the walk less objectionable, John Bell has suggested a walkway with appropriate landscaping, signage and, possibly, new steps, leading north from the entrance to the backstage, behind the library



and Masonic Building and into the *Manistee News Advocate's* lot to Water Street. He feels this could make the use of the city lots less objectionable and help free up closer space.

- Evaluate availability of sufficient handicapped parking and determine best means to accommodate any shortcomings
- Include parking and drop-off directions with ticket orders and other mailings to steer customers to the best available spaces; include parking maps and directions on Web sites and in concert/performance publicity
- Develop additional signage near the building to direct patrons to available parking
- Utilize volunteers or local law enforcement to direct patrons to available parking and speed ingress and egress on busy nights
- Determine best route and feasibility of a new walkway to move patrons from the city lots on Water Street more directly and easily to The Ramsdell





## **V. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. Overview**

### **B. Programming**

### **C. Marketing and Promotion**

Overview

Identity and Branding

Advertising

Pricing

Public Relations and Promotions

Sense of Occasion

Marketing Administration

### **D. Finance, Governance and Management**

Overview

Finance

Governance

Management



## Overview

Realization of the entire plan laid out in the previous pages is a process that will evolve over several years – changing as new experiences warrant and opportunities present themselves. To spark the initial change and make a meaningful impact on the community, however, will require embracing some first, bold steps to “kick-start” the organization along with a commitment to letting the process play out in the chosen direction.

As stated earlier, this new resolve and commitment is necessary to fully realize the extraordinary potential that exists in this century-old complex. Its original design and its history since opening have shown it to be a place for the community, offering a home not just for the “community arts,” but the entire community. It is important to embrace the entire complex as a new “Community Arts Center” (MCAC), not just the home of Manistee’s existing creative class, but a place where young and old from all walks of life can learn and be entertained. It was designed to be used by the community, and should be much more regularly.

To begin the process, first steps include:

- Adopt the general provisions of this plan as a roadmap for programming and growth into the future
- Recognize the complex as “The Ramsdell – Manistee’s Community Arts Center”
- Approve the recommended vision and mission statements or compose similar statements of commitment and vision

**Proposed Vision Statement – *Enriching our community by providing unique entertainment and learning experiences in a majestic theatre***

**Proposed Mission Statement – *To maintain an irreplaceable community asset as a vibrant entertainment and education center through programming excellence, fiscal stability, strong community partnerships, and committed volunteers***



## Programming – Recommended Actions

### Increase the availability of live performances in the Theatre for the community

#### Presentation Series

In the first year, new programming recommendations can be combined with existing Players' programs to offer the community a near monthly schedule. Promoted jointly under a new collective Ramsdell marketing effort, programs could include:

Late June/early July – MCP "South Pacific"  
Mid/late July – Leon Redbone or comedian Lynn Koplitz  
Mid August – MCP "Bus Stop"  
Mid to late September -- Leon Redbone or comedian Lynn Koplitz  
Mid October – MCP "Sweeney Todd"  
Mid November – "Nutcracker"  
Early December – MCP "A Christmas Carol"  
Mid February – Magician Jania Taylor and a night of Vaudeville entertainments  
Mid March – MCP "TBA"  
Early April – Classical music or Jazz collaborative program  
Late April – "Roots on the River" collaborative program  
Mid May – Rotary Show

In this scenario, The Ramsdell is only financially responsible for three programs with shared responsibility (to be determined) on three others. (MCP will continue to be responsible for their production and promotion.) Other possibilities can be investigated as things progress with additional performances added in subsequent years.

In regard to the prospect of additional performances of MCP musicals, Dr. Plummer responded:

*I might be agreeable to adding the two Thursdays if I thought it would be financially doable—Royalty costs are already high for musicals and adding two performances will increase those costs. Royalties for Cabaret this fall, for instance, were \$2,800 for 6 performances; royalties for Annie Get Your Gun last summer were \$4,300 for 6 performances. I anticipate that the Rodgers & Hammerstein South Pacific will come in at or slightly higher than Annie...Gun from last summer and that Sweeney Todd will be higher than Cabaret. We would need to ensure a net profit of \$700-800 for each of the added performances just to break even. Another issue is that we would need to increase our advertising budget to ensure that we could maximize sales for the added performances. An additional (although lesser) problem of adding the weekday performances is that it extends the commitment of community actors to the production—I would need to add a day or two on the front-end of the rehearsal process to compensate for losing the day of final rehearsal and add a day in the off week for a rehearsal prior to re-opening for the second Thursday. Admittedly, this is a smaller problem than the financial risk, but a problem nonetheless. Again, I would be agreeable, but we'd all have to really crunch the numbers and determine if it would work financially and in terms of the human logistics of the production.*

Realistically, it may be prudent to not attempt the addition this year, but, after evaluating reaction to this year's shows, include it in the initial planning for 2012.



## **Travel/Adventure Cinema Series**

In addition to the live performances, a series of travelogues could be offered. These are relatively inexpensive and should appeal to Manistee's more mature population. Scheduled on a weeknight, maybe Thursdays, four programs could be presented as follows:

Mid to late September  
Early November  
February  
April

Sponsorships would be sought and should be appealing to banks, medical offices, insurance companies and/or investment firms. Presenters bring their own projectors and utilize the venue's screen and sound, minimizing the need for further investment except for the screen. Prices for the first year have been presented as \$750 per speaker.

## **Initiate a new focus on film exhibition**

Changes in The Vogue's status with a potential re-opening in the more immediate future than originally projected has made this recommendation less timely. The addition of projection equipment and regular scheduling of film activity should be put on hold until a more exact schedule for re-opening The Vogue has been established and collaborative opportunities more fully explored. Projection capabilities are still important for the facility as it would be usable for theatrical presentations as well as meetings and other film initiatives, but scheduling of the acquisition could be moved pending The Vogue's re-opening and its potential programming opportunities.

## **Family Series**

Regardless of the final decision on purchasing a projector, the **children/family initiative** could still take a mixed form in the first year. Both "Nutcracker" and "Christmas Carol" matinees could be included in a "Family Series" along with specially booked offerings to provide near monthly opportunities for family entertainments. Included could be live children's theatre offerings from Theatreworks or Wild Swan, and Jania Taylor could add a children's matinee with her magic program. Mixed with a film or two, this series could bring Manistee's young audiences and their parents into the building on a regular basis. Promoted jointly under a new collective Ramsdell marketing effort, programs, all matinees, could include:

Mid-September – MCP "Alladin"  
Late October – Halloween program TBA  
Mid November – "Nutcracker"  
Early December – "Christmas Carol"  
Mid February – Magician Jania Taylor  
Mid March – MCP TBA  
Mid April – Film showing TBA

## **Encourage local filmmakers with opportunities for showings and discussions**

The debate over state film tax credits may play a bigger roll in this activity than the status of The Vogue, but The Ramsdell should continue to encourage local filmmakers by being encouraging and collaborative in presenting hometown premieres, festivals, and filmmaking workshops and



seminars that are not only geared to experienced presenters but also as a part of the learning programs offered for both children and adults. A film camp is tentatively penciled in for a week in the summer to bring out budding young filmmakers to learn the beginnings of the craft.

**Encourage attendance at new initiatives by adding beer and wine service and other concessions**

The additional revenue possibilities from even the simplest concession offerings could be an important addition to future operations. The seats are designed to withstand stains and spills and major problems are not anticipated nor experienced by other historical theatres in the state that offer both alcoholic and other concessions. Initially, offerings could be limited to certain shows as a trial, but failure to take any action to open up these possibilities for additional revenue is almost fiscally irresponsible given the budget demands that exist today.

The liquor license is even more important due to the potential for controlling sales and adding revenues in the ballroom. The licensing process may take at least six months and should begin as soon as possible to allow time for the various actions and approvals necessary. In the meantime, customer interest could be tested and some additional revenue generated by obtaining a few daily licenses for certain events.

**Augment programming and increase participation by area residents with innovative and creative learning experiences for all age groups; provide opportunities to enhance the audience's understanding of the art forms represented**

Anecdotal reports in the local market area have supported the prospects for developing a community music school in the building's classrooms. Combined with the existing dance classes and new theatre and art classes, a true school of the arts is possible. Lack of staff and volunteers has been the major hindrance to MCP and MAI offering classes, but new leadership, coordinated scheduling and joint promotion could ensure a regular schedule of classes throughout the week. Instructors and oversight have been tentatively identified for the music portion and it could be functioning as early as this fall along with the other disciplines in either weekly offerings or ad hoc programs. Organized correctly, each class or private lesson should return net income to the organization.

The **early childhood program** is a longer term suggestion to be investigated and explored as other learning programs are established and developed.

Several special learning programs are also possible to build interest and audiences in the first year and beyond:

The **Missoula Children's Theatre** provides a week-long residency "starring" 50-60 local students in a full-scale musical. MCT has been touring for 35 years, and annually visits nearly 1,300 communities in all 50 states, three Canadian Territories and five provinces, and 16 countries. Their mission is *the development of lifeskills in children through participation in the performing arts*. Creativity, social skills, goal achievement, communication skills and self-esteem are all characteristics that are attained through participation in this unique and educational project. Their team of two professional tour actor/directors arrive in town with scenery, costumes, props, make-up and basic lighting—everything it takes to put on a play . . . except the cast.



This week-long residency begins with an open group audition and culminates in two public performances. Fifty to sixty students grades K-12, or a combination of these ages, are cast and well rehearsed throughout the week, learning lines, songs and choreography to perform as an ensemble in producing a full-length musical. All of their shows are original adaptations of children's stories and fairytales—a twist on the classic stories that people know and love.

A week in the summer could bring together locals and visitors, as the company is well-known throughout the country, or it can also be scheduled during the school year. It may be too late to schedule this summer, but should be considered in the future. It could be promoted with a less expensive series of workshops they also offer.

An **Academy of Lifelong Learning** is a non-credit continuing education program for adults with potential classes in local, national and world history, religion and self improvement, science, health, music, art, nature and financial management, to name only a few. It's a continual learning and enrichment activity for adults with programs that promote growth, culture, and spiritual life through academic courses and social interaction. A number of these programs are already available in the surrounding area and could be brought into The Ramsdell as a special offering for a different age demographic, or unique programs could be built using local and regional resources.

**Increase promotion efforts and add air conditioning to expand usage of the ballroom**

Engineering work is proceeding. Rates and regulations should be reviewed and revised.

**Review building plans to ensure they fully support programming needs and provide functional, revenue producing space**

No further recommendations are necessary at this time.



**Proposed Calendar**



**Proposed Calendar**



## Proposed Calendar



**Proposed Calendar**



**Proposed Calendar**



**Proposed Calendar**



**Proposed Calendar**



## Marketing and Promotion – Recommended Actions

### Identity and Branding

Besides the overall branding recommendation in the overview, the most important change to be made is the splitting of the Web site to establish The Ramsdell as its own identity independent of the Civic Players. In this transition, the historical and restoration information should come onto the Ramsdell site as well as the Art Institute information and a link to the Players' site. The new "brand" and its "look," then, becomes the overarching identity for all marketing communications and signage related to the facility. It should also be used in all references by the tenants in their communications.

### Advertising

With the new brand established, advertising should be organized to promote The Ramsdell as inclusive of the many activities detailed above. Monthly calendars, some newspaper, social networking and other vehicles should all be used regularly to promote activities in the building. This would be in addition to any specific promotions undertaken by the Players and other presenting organizations.

Of particular importance for The Ramsdell's own presentations is maximization of the TREAT Tickets promotion capabilities. A separate account from the Players should be established (and it was also suggested that a computer upgrade is necessary in the box office). TREAT offers not only ticket sales but a variety of marketing vehicles at no additional cost including listing on the regional calendar on TREATTicket.com. They also currently have ticketing kiosks at three locations in Traverse City, where the majority of their events are held, but might provide audiences for certain attractions in the new series. One is at the Dennon Museum Center, one at Horizon Books, and one at the Traverse City Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Once a day all events on TREATicket.com are streamed to PublicDrum, a nonprofit event listing service in the Lansing area. A new project is being launched in May by ArtServe Michigan, which includes a statewide events calendar. TREAT is exploring the opportunity to stream all of their events to the ArtServe site. Also, each organization has full access to its *own* patron data to use in its own marketing initiatives, i.e., every sale generates a new name for the mailing/email list.

Treat also offers **Optional Marketing on a Fee Basis**. Included in this is:

**ArtsPulse** - monthly newsletter: \$25 per issue for arts and cultural organizations ticketing through TREAT; \$35 per issue for other arts and cultural organizations. Annual rates of \$225 for 12 listings for organizations ticketing through TREAT and \$325 others organizations. The 12 issues can be used in any combination since some organizations have more than one event a month and no events in other months.

**TREATAlert** - weekly e-mail blast: available only to organizations ticketing through TREAT. This goes to 11,900 addresses for \$50 for nonprofits; \$75 for profit organizations.

They also offer prominent positions on the home page of TREATickets.com. Feature tabs and sub-feature placement is \$10 per week and sponsor placement on the right side of the site is \$50 per month.



## **Pricing**

A three-tiered pricing structure with a premium for the main floor boxes is recommended for the Presentation Series. Priced at \$25, \$20 and \$10 with \$30 for the boxes, this structure generates a gross of \$9,800. This grows to \$11,000 for an all-\$25 pricing and goes down to \$6,950 with a \$20, \$15 and \$10 configuration. Pricing will depend on the act requirements. Details follow.

Further, at the risk of encroaching on another organization's internal affairs, the Governors should consider "gently pushing" the Players to alter their season ticket coupon policy to ensure the city receives the most revenue for their most popular shows. MCP offers season ticket "coupons" at six for \$77, or \$12.83 per ticket to be used for any show in any quantity. This is a reasonable discount when the coupon is used for a \$14 ticket, but it is extremely generous and depriving the City of revenue when used for a \$20 ticket. It is only an 8% discount on the \$14 ticket, but balloons to 36% off the \$20 ticket. Like single events, the season coupon should reflect the difference in pricing between the offerings. A comparable discount for the musical tickets would equate to \$110 for six coupons and provide the Players with almost an additional \$6 per coupon – a sizable amount for the shows that are the best attended and the most expensive to produce.

## **Public Relations and Promotions**

Besides developing a sustained public relations effort including media contact, cross promotions with other organizations, and community outreach activities, while applying a consistent look, feel, and writing style to the collateral and press materials, some event should be held to "kick-off" the new activities. A stand alone evening in the Theatre with a preview of coming attractions might work with a food and drink incentive included, but it may also be good to tie it into one of the new events with some kind of perk.

## **Sense of Occasion**

Many of the recommendations in this section are ongoing and tied to specific offerings. They also require some staff creativity and attention to detail. Most important in the list is an effort to open the MAI gallery for all performances to heighten the audience's "sense of occasion" when attending events at The Ramsdell and to help reinforce the collaborative nature of The Ramsdell's activities. These could be shows held over from a current exhibit scheduled with MCP, or they might offer special exhibits and other activities in the gallery that expand upon the presentations in the Theatre. It might not even be an MAI event, as a show based on a children's book might attract something from the library or bookstore or could include children's art specifically solicited for the occasion. The important thing is to get people circulating throughout the building when there for a performance.

## **Marketing Administration**

As stated earlier, providing quality staff and organization to the marketing effort will be difficult under the current structure. It will be important to try and establish a central source that jointly promotes the new initiatives along with the activities of the current tenants to maximize the overall effectiveness. Volunteers with marketing backgrounds might be helpful with these efforts, or donated time from a local business could fill-in part of the need. Also, collaboration with MSDDA and other organizations promoting Manistee will be a must. Important in these efforts will be to develop a "nucleus of communication" for the entire organization to assure all tenants, staff and volunteers have access to, and knowledge of, all activities in the facility.



## Proposed Ticket Pricing Schedule

	No.	Price	Total \$	Price	Total \$	Price	Total \$	Price	Total \$
<b>Boxes</b>									
Ramsdell	6	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 120.00
D. W. Filer	4	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 80.00
E. Golden Filer	6	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 120.00
Buckley	4	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 80.00
	20		\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00		\$ 400.00
<b>Main Floor</b>									
<i>Center</i>									
A - J	99	\$ 25.00	\$ 2,475.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 2,475.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 1,485.00
K - N	41	\$ 20.00	\$ 820.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,025.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 820.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 615.00
<i>Left</i>									
A - L	51	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,020.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,275.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,020.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 765.00
<i>Right</i>									
A - L	56	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,120.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,120.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 840.00
	247		\$ 5,435.00		\$ 6,175.00		\$ 4,940.00		\$ 3,705.00
<b>Balcony</b>									
<i>Center</i>									
A - D	45	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 675.00
<i>Left</i>									
A - G	47	\$ 20.00	\$ 940.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,175.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 940.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 705.00
<i>Right</i>									
A - G	49	\$ 20.00	\$ 980.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,225.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 980.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 735.00
	141		\$ 3,045.00		\$ 3,525.00		\$ 2,820.00		\$ 2,115.00
<b>Second Balcony</b>									
A - K	73	\$ 10.00	\$ 730.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 730.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 730.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 730.00
	481		\$ 9,810.00		\$ 11,030.00		\$ 9,090.00		\$ 6,950.00



## Finance, Governance, and Management – Recommended Actions

### Overview

An overall goal of these activities, besides the enhanced service to the people of Manistee and the maintenance of an important community asset, is to do so while relieving the City of its operational responsibilities and budgetary expense. To do so requires the following:

- Grow net income from theatre sponsored events sufficient to cover annual operating expenses each year
- Define and operate an effective grant and endowment program
- Establish and operate an effective donor management program
- Explore development of a case for securing funding via a special millage
- Design and maintain an effective organizational structure based on the current needs and strategic direction of The Ramsdell

Full attainment of these goals will not be achieved in year one, however, the new programs are designed to initially provide net revenue at significantly less than capacity attendance, while supplemental revenue begins to be generated from development of new donor initiatives related to the increased base of users.

### Finance

Doing nothing new ensures that the City will need to expend at least \$65,000 for out-of-pocket operating expenses of The Ramsdell for the 2011-12 budget year. Should there be some fall off in audience for the Players, that number will increase. The new programming initiatives have been designed to expand revenues at little or no risk. Concession sales and adjustments in the policies governing rental of the ballroom further add income potential at a time when the City can ill afford to add expense.

It is expected that costs for normal operations for utilities, staff and other expenses will not change significantly in the new year. Completion of the HVAC improvements may affect utility costs, but that is not known at this time and may not be effective for an entire season regardless of any economies achieved with a more modern system.

Additional information is necessary to provide a complete budget, but proposed activities are expected to work as follows:

#### Presentation Series

Three performances	
Artists	\$12,000
Stagehands	600
Other house exp.	400
Advertising	<u>4,000</u>
	\$17,000
Sponsorship	\$ 3,000
Ticket Sales	<u>14,500</u> @ 50% attendance; total potential \$29,000
	\$17,500



### **Travel/Adventure Cinema Series**

Four performances	
Artists	\$ 3,200
Stagehands	800
Other house exp.	400
Advertising	<u>4,000</u>
	\$ 8,400
Sponsorship	\$ 1,000
Ticket Sales	<u>7,400</u> @ 50% attendance; total potential \$14,400
	\$ 8,400

**Family Series** – is not complete enough to project, though only three programs require Ramsdell expense.

**Learning Programs** – are expected to incur initial advertising costs and then provide net income per event or lesson. Events where the number of confirmed participants does not cover the expected expense will not be held.

A first year goal for the two ticketed series might be \$10,000 net income which could be achieved with 75% capacity at all performances. Additionally, a more aggressive sponsor campaign might add a series sponsorship to one or both.

### **Governance – Friends and Volunteers**

To “staff” the new events while providing additional financial resources, another “re-organization” of the Friends organization is suggested. The purposes as laid out in the new bylaws do not need to be revised, nor does the Board/Membership structure. The Board would be asked to be more active and diligent in performing their responsibilities as defined in Article II, which include:

- To obtain funds by solicitation and donations and all other available legal means for the primary purpose of endowing the Ramsdell Theatre and the secondary purpose of restoration and rehabilitation of the Ramsdell Theatre and Hall.
- To serve as the advisory board for the Ramsdell Theatre Endowment Fund at the Manistee County Community Foundation
- To work cooperatively with the Ramsdell Theatre Governing Authority to ensure the sustainability and preservation of the Ramsdell Theatre.
- To acquire properties of all kinds, in any manner not prohibited by law or contrary to sound ethical standards, and to manage, administer and dispose of same for the benefit of the Ramsdell Theatre and Hall consonant with these purposes.
- To borrow money, and to issue notes, bonds, debentures, and other forms of obligations and to secure the same by note, mortgage, pledge or otherwise.
- To make, perform and carry out contracts and services of every kind and description pertaining to the purposes of this corporation, and for any lawful purposes necessary and expedient thereto with any person, firm, association or corporation, and to perform all acts in addition to those expressly enumerated herein which are necessary in order to effectuate the objectives and purposes of this corporation.

In practice, however, these duties would all be performed more in concert with the Governors and more selectively as to their scope, i.e., fundraising and solicitation would be more limited to



specific projects or needs for the restoration and rehabilitation and not expand to operating needs. If willing, they may also be helpful in solicitation of endowment and planned gifts. Also in this “revised” role, the fourth and fifth purposes dealing with acquiring property and borrowing money would probably be passed totally to the Governors and the City.

Article III already provides that: “Any individual who makes a donation of money, assets, time, in-kind labor or other to the organization, as determined by the Board, may be deemed to have the status of “Friends of the Ramsdell.” It goes on to state that: “Friends shall have no authority over the affairs of the organization.” This “status” recognition is where a major change might occur as, instead of tacitly accepting whatever or whomever comes, a specific solicitation would be made to build a corps of donors and volunteers to help staff events and raise additional monies for The Ramsdell. Once established, committees could be organized under Article VI to carry out the necessary functions. Prime among these would be staffing concerts and events and soliciting funds to help grow The Ramsdell’s activities and standing in the community. Two classes of “Friends” are recommended:

**Friends:**           \$25 - \$49           (Basic annual membership)  
Includes:            Newsletter  
                          Advance concert and activity announcements  
                          Special “Friends” events year round  
                          Inclusion in a volunteer pool, at your choosing, to usher, host  
                          artists, sell concessions or perform other duties as required for concerts  
                          and events (includes free admission to the event)

**Contributing Friends:**  
\$50 - \$99  
Includes:            All of the above  
                          Advance ticket purchase opportunities  
                          Program/newsletter recognition  
                          Bar privileges for Friend and a guest over 21 (if a Club Liquor  
                          License is secured)

\$100 - \$499  
Includes:            All of the above  
                          Advance ticket purchase opportunity for special seating sections

\$500 - \$999  
Includes:            All of the above  
                          Special event invitations and recognitions

\$1,000 +  
Includes:            All of the above  
                          Special event specifically for these donors

Though the dollar levels alone may be sufficient in recognition listings, many organizations use theatrical names for the various donor levels, which could also be done here. Possibilities include “Supporting Cast,” “Leading Role,” etc. Other possibilities include identifying with the history of the building such as the MCP categories “Walter Burrigge, Solon Beman and T.J. Ramsdell Circles.” It seems the founding fathers should be identified with the building support while more theatrical sounding categories should be identified with the Players, but it may not



be important. There does need to be a separation on the Web site to offer Ramsdell volunteer and giving options in addition to the Players and Art Institute options. Volunteers would not be turned away for failing to pay the basic membership, however, the more desirable jobs will be first offered to “official” Friends.

The initial solicitation for participation would be coincidental with an announcement of the new activities and supported with direct mail or emails to available lists. A pre-evaluation of the lists would be done to identify prospects for higher donations and those individuals would be singled out for a special solicitation. Once people begin to participate, committees can be organized and led by individuals specifically identified and solicited to take a leadership role. Primary committees would include Membership, Volunteer Coordination, and a committee to organize and operate at least one special fundraising event. One possibility, a “Founder’s Ball,” has been penciled in on the calendar for December 18 to recognize T. J. Ramsdell’s grand opening party for his invited guests in 1902.

To further enhance the viability of a new Friends organization, events could be scheduled specifically for members throughout the year. Many could be tied to performances as a pre- or post-party/gathering, but others could just be organized to build camaraderie and increase membership. The focus could even be on younger professionals with fun activities to expand their personal, social, romantic or business networks. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter should play an important part. Things like a dance in the ballroom with a recognized band, special talks by visiting artists, or a “table of eight” dinner, where people are placed with people they don’t know to get acquainted, are all possibilities. Most of these events could include charges to cover any costs, while some might be provided free as a solicitation tool.

A first year goal might be to develop 200 – 250 new members and at least \$10,000, with a doubling of those numbers in year two. If a major gifts committee could be organized with the “right” individuals, several gifts in the \$500 - \$1000 range are not out of the question and could provide an additional \$5,000.

## **Sponsorships**

Key to minimizing any risk involved in new presentations will be to have program sponsorships confirmed before contracting. This may not always be feasible but, initially, would be the best policy. Both a series and event sponsor should be sought with appropriate distinctions in the perks provided to each. In regard to the latter, perks provided should entail no more than minimal expense to the organization and not undercut potential ticket sales in any way.

Sponsorships should be at least \$100 to suggest the eleemosynary nature of the support, but also have some relationship to the expense involved. For instance, the Travel/Adventure Cinema Series is priced at \$750 per show, or a total of \$3,000. The series sponsorship could be priced at \$1,000 with individual events at \$200 to \$250. Even if a series sponsor was not secured, the individual sponsorships would reduce the exposure so that the artist fees are covered with fewer than 100 tickets sold.

A suggested “grid” outlining perks and rates for various programs follows.



## Proposed Sponsorship Program

	Presentation Series		Travel/Adventure		Family Series	
	Series	Event	Series	Event	Series	Event
	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$250	\$1,000	\$200
Name included in series title	X		X		X	
Name and logo in series brochure/schedule	X		X		X	
Name and logo in series print ads	X		X		X	
Name on series passes	X		X		X	
Name and logo on series collateral materials	X		X		X	
Sponsor tag on series electronic media ads	X		X		X	
Lobby signage for all events in series	X		X		X	
Name and logo on Ramsdell Web site for series	X		X		X	
Credit in press releases for series	X		X		X	
On screen promotion	X		X		X	
Name and logo in event print ads	X	X	X	X	X	X
Name and logo on event collateral materials	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sponsor tag on any event electronic media ads	X	X	X	X	X	X
Credit in press releases for event	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lobby signage for individual event	X	X	X	X	X	X
Name and logo on Ramsdell Web site for event	X	X	X	X	X	X
Passes for each event in series	10		10		10	
Passes for each event		10		10		10
Discounted admissions per event	10	10	10	10	10	10
Contributing Friends Memberships	1	1	1	1	1	1
VIP Contributing Friends Memberships	1		1		1	
Newsletter/program listing	X	X	X	X	X	X



## Management

A variety of management recommendations are already included in section IV, however, key to “getting off on the right foot” is to have some experienced leadership to augment the City staffers and assume responsibility for the new programming initiatives, including their organization, promotion and operation. It is also critical to be able to do so in a short amount of time to play off of some of the community enthusiasm surrounding The Vogue renovation while ensuring that The Ramsdell is not “lost in the shuffle” and relegated to irrelevance. Tasks that need to be accomplished include:

- Booking/contracting acts for the series
- Establishing operational guidelines and procedures for performances
- Developing marketing plans and materials to promote the new programming, specifically, and The “New” Ramsdell, in general
- Developing and executing solicitations for Friends and Sponsors
- Overseeing operational changes required in ticketing, Web site management, etc.
- Organizing the learning programs and establishing policies and procedures, operational guidelines and responsibilities for those involved
- Advising on capital needs and overseeing acquisition/completion of approved projects/purchases

Several of these tasks need to be completed by June.

Once established, it is anticipated that a qualified individual(s) can be identified to oversee the new programs or individual pieces as necessary, with the expense built into the program fees and revenues so that there is still additional net income reducing the City’s obligations. For instance, once up and running, a teacher involved in the lesson program might be willing to accept responsibility for organizing the others and overseeing the operations for a modest additional fee that can be built into all lesson charges. Also, once new Friends are “on board” it is expected that volunteer leadership with ad hoc administrative support will be able to oversee the solicitation of additional Friends and Sponsors. Staffing the building during the additional open times might also become a volunteer assignment with days and times organized by the Volunteer committee. One experience some years ago suggests that this is feasible as it involved a small and aging group of women who were able to maintain five-day-a-week, 50 weeks a year open hours and phone coverage for an historic home that they had maintained since the early 1900s – entirely with their dwindling membership.

As suggested earlier, some donated expertise, especially in the marketing area, might also be possible, and there are any number of promoters willing to assist in booking acts once program interests have been identified and tested.

In the meantime, an individual or firm with experience in a multi-faceted, arts-oriented operation could be engaged for the first year to accomplish the tasks enumerated above, with the goal of introducing The Ramsdell’s new direction to the community by June and beginning the new program schedule in July. The organization/individual would need to be used to working in a “start-up” kind of environment with experience not just in concert presentation but also a background in providing learning programs in a non-school setting. They would also need to be willing to work within the financial confines of the projected first year net income gains. A full-year engagement would also ensure next summer’s educational programs are selected and promoted in time.



## Proposed Implementation Schedule

	Priority	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	▶▶
<b>Overview</b>	1	█					
	1	█					
	1	█					
	1	█					
<b>Programming</b>	1		█	█			
	1		█	█		█	
	2		█				
	1	█					
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█
	2	█	█	█	█	█	█
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>Marketing and Promotion</b>	1	█					
	1	█					
	1	█					
	2	█	█	█	█	█	█
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>Finance, Governance, and Management</b>	1	█					
	1	█					
	1	█					
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█
	2	█	█	█	█	█	█
	1	█	█	█	█	█	█

Responsible:

- █ Board of Governors
- █ New Management
- █ Joint
- █ Friends' Board
- █ Initial Event



# **APPENDICES**

- 1. Tapestry LifeMode and Segmentation Descriptions**
- 2. Projection and Sound Quotes**
- 3. Seat Cleaning and Care**



## APPENDIX

### Tapestry LifeMode and Segmentation Descriptions

**L12 American Quilt** – Location in America’s small towns and rural areas links the four segments in *American Quilt*. Households in *American Quilt* are more affluent, with a median household income of \$45,729, and more are homeowners. The rural lifestyle is also evident, with fishing, hunting, and power boats along with a preference for pickups and country music.

- **31 Rural Resort Dwellers** – Although retirement beckons, most of these residents still work. Household types include empty-nester married couples, singles, and married couples with children. The median household income is \$48,105, slightly below the U.S. level. The median age is 47.2 years; more than half are aged 55 and older. Six percent of those who are employed work at home, twice the U.S. rate. Because so many residents are aged 65 and older, receipt of retirement income and Social Security benefits is common. More than two-fifths collect investment income; approximately 20 percent receive self-employment income. Nearly one in four residents aged 25 years and older holds a bachelor’s or graduate degree; half of the residents have attended college. More than two-fifths collect investment income; approximately 20 percent receive self-employment income. The median net worth is \$111,790, slightly below the U.S. median.

#### *Preferences*

These residents live modestly and have simple tastes. They often work on home improvement and remodeling projects and own garden equipment to maintain their yards. They cook and bake at home. Many households own multiple pets, particularly dogs and cats. Riding lawn mowers and satellite dishes are familiar sights in these areas, along with multiple vehicles, including a truck. Active participants in local civic issues, residents also belong to environmental groups, church and charitable organizations, fraternal orders, unions, and veterans’ clubs. They go hiking, boating, canoeing, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and golfing. They listen to country radio and watch Animal Planet, CMT, BBC America, the National Geographic Channel, and prime time dramas on TV. The older residents focus on their general health care, prescription medications, and financial and retirement-related matters. Many residents actively manage or plan their investments and retirement savings. The self-employed residents are more likely to have IRAs than 401(k) plans.

- **46 Rooted Rural** – The population of the *Rooted Rural* segment is slightly older, with a median age of 42.3 years; 50 percent are older than age 55. Married-couple families dominate these rural neighborhoods; however, 23 percent are singles who live alone. More of the married-couple families are empty-nesters than those who have children. The median household income for this segment is \$38,234; the median net worth is \$62,041. The labor force participation of 56 percent is below the national level. One-third of the households receive Social Security benefits. Although the agricultural industry is more prominent in this market than at the U.S. level, many employed residents work in the service and manufacturing industry sectors. More than three in four people aged 25 or more have graduated from high school; 12 percent hold a bachelor’s or graduate degree.



## *Preferences*

*Rooted Rural* residents are do-it-yourselfers. These settled families take pride in their homes and keep busy with home improvement and remodeling projects. They also take pride in their gardens, regularly buying lawn and garden insecticides, flower and vegetable seeds, and plants. Typical of their rural lifestyle, many have a lawn or garden tractor and ATVs and own an assortment of tools. They prefer domestic vehicles; most households own or lease a truck. Typically, a household member handles vehicle maintenance. Many homes have pets. When families eat out, they prefer Ryan's Family Steakhouse, but they generally prepare meals at home with fresh vegetables freezer to store their produce. They shop for groceries and buy their favorite Folger's coffee at Winn-Dixie, Piggly Wiggly, or a Wal-Mart Supercenter. They hunt, fish, ride horseback, attend country music concerts, and go to car races. They read hunting and fishing magazines and listen to country music and auto racing on the radio. Many have a satellite dish so they can watch rodeo/bull riding, truck and tractor pulls, reality TV, auto racing, and fishing programs as well as a variety of shows on CMT.

**L05 Senior Styles** – More than 14.4 million households in the nine *Senior Styles* segments comprise one of the largest LifeMode summary groups. As the U.S. population ages, two of the fastest growing American markets are found among *The Elders* and the *Silver and Gold* segments. *Senior Styles* segments illustrate the diversity among today's senior markets. Although incomes within this group cover a wide range, the median is \$45,396, attributable mostly to retirement income or Social Security payments. Younger, more affluent seniors, freed of their child-rearing responsibilities, are traveling and relocating to warmer climates. Their lifestyles can be as diverse as their circumstances, but senior markets do have common traits among their preferences. Golf is their favorite sport; they play and watch golf on TV. They read the newspaper daily and prefer to watch news shows on television. Although their use of the Internet is nearly average, they are more likely to shop through QVC than online.

- **50 Heartland Communities** – Settled and close-knit, residents of *Heartland Communities* have a median age of 42.4 years. Approximately half of the residents have already retired, many in the same towns where they have lived and worked their whole lives. Nearly half are aged 55 years or older. Although married-couple families comprise nearly half of the household types and almost one-third are singles who live alone, other family types and shared housing are also represented. Children are found in 30 percent of the households. The median household income is \$35,701. Two-thirds of the households earn wage and salary income, and 39 percent receive Social Security benefits. Because of low home value, their median net worth is \$49,675. Employed residents work in occupations ranging from management positions to unskilled labor jobs; approximately 40 percent are employed in service industries. The percentage of the population aged 25 years or older that has completed high school is higher than the U.S. level; the percentage that has attended college is far lower than the U.S. figure.

## *Preferences*

*Heartland Communities* residents invest time and money in their cherished homes and communities. They take pride in their gardening skills and in growing their own



vegetables. Many homes own a riding lawn mower to keep up their relatively large lots. Residents tackle home improvement projects such as exterior painting and faucet replacement and shop at Ace Hardware or Lowe's. Many residents order items from catalogs, QVC, and Avon sales representatives. They also shop at Wal-Mart or Kmart and buy groceries at Wal-Mart Supercenters. Favorite restaurants include Golden Corral and Cracker Barrel. The residents in this segment rarely travel by plane. *Heartland Communities* residents have a distinctly country lifestyle. They go hunting and fishing. They also read gardening, fishing, and hunting magazines and listen to country music and auto racing on the radio. Reading two or more Sunday newspapers is important to them. Some join fraternal orders or religious clubs and even get involved with local politics. Many *Heartland Communities* households subscribe to cable and usually watch news programs and movies on TV.

- **14 Prosperous Empty Nesters** – Approximately 6 in 10 householders in *Prosperous Empty Nesters* neighborhoods are aged 55 years or older. Forty percent of the households are composed of married couples with no children living at home. Residents are enjoying the move from child-rearing to retirement. The median age is 48.6 years. Population in this segment is increasing slowly, at 0.7 percent annually; however, the pace will probably accelerate as the Baby Boomers mature. With a median net worth of \$275,233, *Prosperous Empty Nesters* invest prudently for the future. The median household income is \$69,227. Although 71 percent of the households earn income from wages and salaries, 59 percent receive investment income, 30 percent collect Social Security benefits, and 28 percent receive retirement income. Forty-one percent of residents aged 25 years and older hold bachelor's or graduate degrees; nearly 70 percent have attended college. Many residents who are still working have solid professional and management careers, especially in the education and health care industry sectors. Residential

#### *Preferences*

*Prosperous Empty Nesters* residents value their health and financial well-being. Their investments include annuities, certificates of deposit held longer than six months, mutual funds, money market funds, tax-exempt funds, and common stock. They hold universal life insurance policies. Residents exercise regularly and take a multitude of vitamins. They refinish furniture and play golf. They also attend golf tournaments and sports events, particularly baseball games and college football games. They order by phone from catalogs and use coupons. Households are likely to own or lease a luxury car. *Prosperous Empty Nesters* residents take pride in their homes and communities, so home remodeling, improvements, and lawn care are priorities. Residents will join a civic club or charitable organization, help with fund-raising, write to a radio station or newspaper editor, and volunteer. They travel extensively in the U.S. and abroad. They read biographies, mysteries, and history books; two or more daily newspapers; and business or fitness magazines. They watch golf, news, and talk programs on TV.

- **29 Rustbelt Retirees** – Most of the households in these neighborhoods are married couples with no children or singles who live alone. Twenty percent are married couples with children. The median age is 45.2 years; more than one-third of the householders are aged 65 years or older. Seventeen percent are veterans. Although many residents still work, the labor force participation rate is 58 percent. Most households derive income from wages. However, 45 percent of households earn income from interest, dividends, and rental properties; 40 percent draw Social Security benefits; and 28



percent receive retirement income. The median household income is \$52,728, just below that of the U.S. median. The median net worth is \$135,486, slightly above the U.S. value. Overall, 86 percent of residents aged 25 years and older have graduated from high school, approximately 50 percent have attended college, and 20 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate degree.

### *Preferences*

These hardworking folks are settled; many have lived in the same house for years. Loyal to country and community, they tend to be politically conservative. They participate in public activities and fund-raising, visit elected officials, and work for political parties or candidates. They belong to fraternal organizations, unions, and veterans' clubs. Practical people who take pride in their homes and gardens, *Rustbelt Retirees* buy home furnishings and work on remodeling projects to update their houses. They watch their pennies, use coupons, and look for bargains at discount stores and warehouse clubs. They own savings bonds and certificates of deposit and hold life insurance policies. They eat out at family restaurants such as Perkins and Friendly's and watch rented movies on DVD instead of going to the theater. They also go bowling, play cards and bingo, gamble in Atlantic City, and go to horse races. They watch home improvement shows, sports events, news programs, game shows, and old reruns on TV. Favorite channels include Home & Garden Television, the Hallmark Channel, and the Weather Channel. They listen to country, oldies, and sports radio and peruse the daily newspaper.

- **57 Simple Living** – With a median age of 41 years, this market is slightly older than the U.S. median of 36.8 years. Approximately one-fifth of *Simple Living* residents are aged 65 years or older; 12 percent are aged 75 or older. Half are singles who live alone or share housing; 32 percent are married-couple families. Young families with children and ethnic cultures are in the minority. This market size is stable with negligible growth. The median household income is \$29,255. Nearly 40 percent of households collect Social Security benefits, 8 percent receive Supplemental Security Income, and 6 percent receive public assistance. Over the years, residents have built equity in their homes and saved their hard-earned dollars to achieve their median net worth of \$15,512. Most residents who are employed work in the health care, retail trade, manufacturing, educational services, and accommodation/food services industry sectors. Overall, 75 percent of residents aged 25 years and older have graduated from high school. Only 15 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate degree.

### *Preferences*

The lifestyle of these residents is reflected by their ages; younger people go to nightclubs and play musical instruments; seniors refinish furniture and go saltwater fishing. Community activities are also important to the latter; they join fraternal orders and veterans' clubs. *Simple Living* households spend wisely on a restricted budget. They buy the essentials at discount stores and occasionally treat themselves to dinner out and a movie. Cable TV is a must for these frequent viewers of family programs, news programs, and game shows. They are big fans of daytime TV. Owning a personal computer, cell phone, or DVD player isn't important.

**L02 Upscale Avenues** – Prosperity is the overriding attribute shared by the seven segments in *Upscale Avenues*. Residents have earned their success from years of hard work. Similar to the



*High Society* segments, many in this group are also well educated with above-average earnings. The median household income for the group is \$70,720, and their median net worth is \$188,740. Prosperous domesticity also characterizes the lifestyle in *Upscale Avenues*. They play golf, lift weights, go bicycling, and take domestic vacations.

- **17 Green Acres** – Seventy-one percent of the households in *Green Acres* neighborhoods are married couples with and without children. Many families are blue-collar Baby Boomers, many with children aged 6–17 years. With more than 10 million people, *Green Acres* represents Tapestry's third largest segment, currently more than 3 percent of the U.S. population and growing by 2.2 percent annually. The median age is 40.7 years. Educated and hard-working, more than one-fourth of *Green Acres* residents hold a bachelor's or graduate degree; more than half have attended college. Labor force participation is 68 percent, with higher employment concentrations in the manufacturing, construction, health care, and retail trade industry sectors. Occupation distributions are similar to those of the U.S. Seventeen percent of the households earn income from self-employment ventures. The median household income is \$64,480; the median net worth is \$177,629. Typical of rural residents, *Green Acres* households own multiple vehicles; 78 percent own two or more vehicles.

#### *Preferences*

Country living describes the lifestyle of *Green Acres* residents. Pet dogs or cats are considered part of the family. These do-it-yourselfers maintain and remodel their homes; projects include roofing and installing carpet or insulation. They own all the necessary power tools, including routers, welders, sanders, and various saws, to finish their projects. Residents also have the right tools to maintain their lawns, flower gardens, and vegetable gardens. They own riding lawn mowers, garden tillers, tractors, and even separate home freezers for the harvest. Continuing the do-it-yourself mode, it is not surprising that *Green Acres* is the top market for owning a sewing machine. A favorite pastime is using their ice cream maker to produce homemade ice cream. They prefer motorcycles and full-size pickup trucks. For exercise, *Green Acres* residents ride their mountain bikes and go fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. They also ride horseback and go power boating, bird watching, target shooting, hunting, motorcycling, and bowling. They listen to auto racing and country music on the radio and read fishing and hunting magazines. Many own satellite dishes so they can watch news programs, the Speed Channel, and auto racing on TV. A favorite channel is Country Music Television.

- **18 Cozy and Comfortable** – *Cozy and Comfortable* residents are middle-aged married couples who are comfortably settled in their single-family homes in older neighborhoods. The median age of 42 years is five years older than the U.S. median of 36.9 years. Most residents are married without children or married couples with school-aged or adult children. With 8.7 million people, this is a relatively large segment that is growing moderately by 0.6 percent annually since 2000. Although the labor force is older, they are in no hurry to retire. The labor force participation rate is 67 percent; the unemployment figure is 9 percent. Employed residents work in professional, managerial, and service occupations in a variety of industry sectors. Occupation distributions are similar to U.S. values. The median household income is \$66,327. Income for 80 percent of the households is earned from wages and salaries. Forty-six percent of households receive investment income. Their median net worth is \$187,640.

#### *Preferences*



*Cozy and Comfortable* residents prefer to own certificates of deposit and consult a financial planner. They typically hold a second mortgage, a new car loan, a home equity line of credit, and a universal life insurance policy. Home improvement and remodeling projects are important to them. Although they will contract for some work, they attempt many projects, especially painting and lawn care. Depending on the season, they play golf or ice skate for exercise. They attend ice hockey games, watch science fiction movies on DVD, and take domestic vacations. They eat at family restaurants such as Friendly's, Bob Evans Farms, and Big Boy. Going online isn't a priority, so they own older home computers. Television is very important; many households own four or more sets so they won't miss any of their favorite shows. They watch sports, particularly football, and news programs. Reading the Sunday newspaper is part of the routine for many.

**L10 Traditional Living** – The four segments in *Traditional Living* convey the perception of real middle-America – hardworking, settled families. The group's higher median age of 38 years also conveys their lifestage – a number of older residents who are completing their child-rearing responsibilities and anticipating retirement. They rely on traditional media such as newspapers for their news.

- **32 Rustbelt Traditions** – These neighborhoods are primarily a mix of married-couple families, single parents, and singles who live alone. With a population of 8.4 million, this segment is one of Tapestry's largest. The median age is 36.5 years, just below the U.S. median. The median household income is \$51,545, slightly below that of the U.S. median. Half of the employed residents work in white-collar jobs. For years, these residents sustained the manufacturing industry that drove local economies. Now, the service industry predominates, followed by manufacturing and retail trade. The median net worth is \$83,418. Their education attainment is improving; more than 84 percent of residents aged 25 years and older have graduated from high school, 15 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate degree, and 44 percent have attended college.

#### *Preferences*

These residents stick close to home; for years, they've lived, worked, shopped, and played in the same area. Not tempted by fads, they stick to familiar products and services. They drive domestic cars. They will spend money on their families, yard maintenance, and home improvements. They will hire contractors for special projects such as the installation of roofing, carpet, and flooring. These financially conservative residents prefer to bank at a credit union and have personal savings. They might carry a personal loan and hold low-value life and homeowner's insurance policies. They're frugal and shop for bargains at Sam's Club, J.C. Penney, and Kmart. They go online weekly to play games and shop. They go bowling, fishing, and hunting and attend car races, country music shows, and ice hockey games. They're big TV fans; they watch sitcoms and sports events. They also subscribe to cable and watch it regularly. Favorite channels are truTV, the Game Show Network, and the Disney Channel.

- **33 Midlife Junction** – The median age for residents in these neighborhoods is 41.5 years; nearly 20 percent are aged 65 years or older. Households are a mix of family types and singles who live alone or share housing. Nearly half are married-couple families; 31 percent are singles. Most are still working; although at 61 percent, the labor force participation rate is slightly below average. A third of the households receive



Social Security. The median household income of \$49,139 is slightly below the U.S. median; the median net worth is \$86,152. Educational attainment levels are comparable to the U.S. levels.

### *Preferences*

*Midlife Junction* residents live quiet, settled lives as they move from child-rearing into retirement. To finance their retirement, they own certificates of deposit, savings bonds, and IRAs. They're careful spenders, always looking for bargains, and not swayed by fads. On weekends, they eat fast food or go to family restaurants such as Friendly's or Perkins. They drive standard-sized domestic cars and shop by mail or phone from the L.L. Bean and J.C. Penney catalogs. They communicate with friends and family by e-mail. They go fishing, take walks, work crossword puzzles, play board games, do woodworking, and read science fiction or romance novels. They watch TV network shows and news programs.

**L11 Factories and Farms** – The segments in the *Factories and Farms* summary group represent rural life — from small towns and villages to farms. Employment in manufacturing and agricultural industries is typical in these small, settled communities across America's breadbasket. Population change is nominal, and the profile is classic. Most households are families, either married couples or married couples with children. By age, the residents of *Factories and Farms* mirror the U.S. distribution, with slightly more retirees. Median household income is a bit lower, almost \$40,524, but so is the home value of \$92,572. Most own their homes. Their lifestyle reflects their locale, emphasizing home and garden care, fishing and hunting, pets, and membership in local clubs.

- **25 Salt of the Earth** – Sixty-five percent of *Salt of the Earth* households are married couples with and without children. Twenty percent of the households are singles who live alone. The average household size of 2.6 people matches the U.S. figure; the average family size of three is below the U.S. value. The median age is 41.5 years. These neighborhoods are the least diverse of the Tapestry segments. Although these residents are older, the labor participation rate is higher than that of the U.S., and the unemployment rate of 5.5 percent is lower. They work in professional and managerial positions and unskilled labor jobs. Higher than average proportions work in skilled labor occupations. Approximately 20 percent of the workers are employed in the manufacturing sector. The median household income of \$51,080 is similar to the U.S. figure. At higher than national rates, residents supplement their wages with income from interest, dividends, rental properties, self-employment businesses, retirement plans, and Social Security benefits. The median net worth is \$105,690. Forty-one percent of the residents aged 25 years and older have attended college; 15 percent have earned a bachelor's or graduate degree. Most of the housing is single family; 12 percent are mobile homes. Twenty-two percent of the homes were built before 1940.

### *Preferences*

*Salt of the Earth* residents are settled, traditional, and hardworking. Independent and self-reliant, they tackle small home improvement and remodeling projects. They spend money and time on their flower and vegetable gardens and own the necessary tools to handle these chores successfully. Twenty-eight percent of the households own three or more vehicles including a truck; many own a motorcycle. One of Tapestry's top segments for owning or leasing multiple vehicles, these residents prefer domestic



vehicles and do their own maintenance. Most of them carry insurance policies to protect themselves and their families. They invest in annuities, certificates of deposit, and U.S. savings bonds. Many families own two or more pets, either dogs or cats. They eat out at family restaurants such as Bob Evans Farms or Cracker Barrel. Satisfying their sweet tooth, they often bake goodies at home. They go fishing, hunting, target shooting, and boating and work out on indoor exercise equipment such as stationary bikes and treadmills. They read fishing and hunting magazines. They listen to country music radio and follow NASCAR racing. Many households own a satellite dish so they can watch CMT and the Speed Channel. Favorite TV programs include auto racing, horse racing, truck and tractor pulls/mud racing, and weekly sitcoms.

- **53 Home Town** – *Home Town* households are a mix of married-couple families, singles who live alone, and single-parent families. With a median age of 34.3 years, this is a slightly younger market than the U.S. as a whole. However, one in three is aged 65 years or older. Many families encompass two generations who have lived and worked in the community; their children plan to do the same. The median household income is \$33,319; the median net worth is \$20,078. Although 73 percent of households derive income from wages and salaries, some rely on Supplemental Security Income and public assistance for support. The manufacturing, retail trade, and service industry sectors are the primary sources of employment for these residents. Unemployment in this segment is slightly higher than the U.S. level. Overall, educational attainment is lower for *Home Town* than for the U.S. Only 8 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate degree; 31 percent have attended college. Change is rare in these low-density, settled neighborhoods, located primarily in the Midwest and South. *Home Town* residents may move from one house to another, but they seldom cross the county line. Seventy-three percent of homes are single-family dwellings, and 11 percent are two- to four-unit structures. Homeownership is at 58 percent. The average gross rent is two-thirds of the U.S. average.

#### *Preferences*

*Home Town* residents savor their quasi-country lifestyle by spending time outdoors fishing and playing football. Indoors, they play video games or watch TV favorites such as courtroom programs, wrestling, or reality shows. Internet access and cell phone use are less important here than in other markets. They shop for groceries at Kroger, Aldi, and Wal-Mart Supercenters. They buy clothes at discount department stores such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, typically located in small local malls. When they eat out, they go to Bob Evans and Ryan's family restaurants or fast-food places.

- **42 Southern Satellites** – Found primarily in the rural South, *Southern Satellites* households consist of married couples with and without children; 22 percent are singles. The median age of 38.1 years is near the U.S. median of 36.9. The median household income is \$39,969; the median net worth is \$52,475. Sixty percent participate in the labor force, slightly below the U.S. percentage. Most households earn income from wages and salaries; 28 percent receive Social Security benefits. The manufacturing and service industry sectors provide most of their jobs. Educational attainment is lower than the national level; 16 percent of residents aged 25 years and older have not graduated from high school.

#### *Preferences*



These rural residents enjoy country life. Fishing and hunting are two favorite leisure activities, and *Southern Satellites* residents spend money for magazines, clothes, and gear related to these interests. Because cable is not always available, many residents own satellite dishes. Many own pets. They work in their vegetable gardens and might own equipment such as riding mowers and tillers to help with outdoor chores. Most households have two or more vehicles to meet their transportation needs; they prefer domestic cars, and many drive trucks. They consider themselves to be politically conservative. They read newspapers and magazines infrequently; however, they listen to country radio and watch fishing programs, NASCAR racing, and country music programs on TV. Owning personal computers and going online from home isn't important to these residents.

**L1 High Society** – Residents of the seven *High Society* neighborhoods are affluent and well educated. They represent slightly more than 12 percent of all U.S. households but generate nearly one-quarter of the total U.S. income. Employment in high paying positions, such as professional or managerial occupations, is a primary reason why the median household income for this group is \$105,006. Most households are married couple families who live in affluent neighborhoods where the median home value is \$329,603. Although this is one of the least ethnically diverse groups in the United States, it is one of the fastest growing, increasing by more than 2 percent annually since 2000. Residents of *High Society* are affluent and active — financially, civically, and physically. They participate in a wide variety of public activities and sports and travel extensively. Try the Internet or radio instead of television to reach these markets.

- **06 Sophisticated Squires** – Residents of *Sophisticated Squires* neighborhoods enjoy cultured country life on the urban fringe. These city escapees accept longer commutes to live near fewer neighbors. Mostly married couple families; more than 40 percent of the households are married couples with children that range from toddlers to young adults. The median age is 38.2 years. Most are baby boomers and are aged between 35 and 54 years. These residents are educated; more than one-third of the population aged 25 years or older holds a bachelor's or graduate degree; another third has attended college. Labor force participation rates are high; occupations range from management to unskilled labor positions. Most work in white-collar jobs. The median household income is \$86,075. Nearly 90 percent of the households earn wage or salary income; nearly half supplement their wages and salaries with interest, dividends, or rental income. The median net worth is \$298,660. More than 80 percent of the households own at least two vehicles. They prefer compact SUVs; however, many drive minivans or full-size SUVs.

#### *Preferences*

Do-it-yourselfers, *Sophisticated Squires* residents take care of their lawns and landscaping; home improvements; and remodeling projects such as bathroom remodeling, installing new light fixtures, painting home interiors, staining decks, and cleaning carpets with their steam cleaners. They like to barbecue on their gas grills and make bread with their bread-making machines. Many households own a motorcycle. A typical household will own three or more cell phones. Looking toward the future, many residents own stocks, bonds, and large life insurance policies. When dieting, they go on Weight Watchers; many own a treadmill or stationary bike to stay fit. They go power boating, play board and word games, do woodworking projects, and attend football and baseball games. Adults also take photos, play golf, and ride their motorcycles. Children



play games on the home personal computer and typically own a video game system. Residents listen to soft adult contemporary music; classic hits; news; all-talk; and sports radio, including broadcasts of professional games. Although many households have four or more TVs, residents watch as much television as typical U.S. households. Favorite programs include news, comedies, dramas, and programs on Home & Garden Television.

- **07 Exurbanites** – *Exurbanites* residents prefer an affluent lifestyle in open spaces beyond the urban fringe. Although 40 percent are empty nesters, another 32 percent are married couples with children still living at home. Half of the householders are aged between 45 and 64 years. They may be part of the “sandwich generation,” because their median age of 45.1 years places them directly between paying for children’s college expenses and caring for elderly parents. To understand this segment, the lifestage is as important as the lifestyle. The 66 percent labor force participation rate is above average. Approximately half work in substantive professional or management positions. These residents are educated; more than 40 percent of the population aged 25 years and older hold a bachelor’s or graduate degree; approximately three in four have attended college. The median net worth is \$395,293, approximately four times the national figure. The median household income is \$87,339. More than 20 percent earn retirement income; another 57 percent receive additional income from investments. Nearly 80 percent of the households own at least two vehicles.

#### *Preferences*

Because of their lifestage, *Exurbanites* residents focus on financial security. They consult with financial planners; have IRA accounts; own shares in money market funds, mutual funds, and tax-exempt funds; own common stock; and track their investments online. Between long-term care insurance and substantial life insurance policies, they are well insured. Many have home equity lines of credit. To improve their properties, *Exurbanites* residents work on their homes, lawns, and gardens. They buy lawn and garden care products, shrubs, and plants. Although they will also work on home improvements such as interior and exterior painting, they hire contractors for more complicated projects. To help them complete their projects, they own all kinds of home improvement tools such as saws, sanders, and wallpaper strippers. They are very physically active; they lift weights, practice yoga, and jog to stay fit. They also go boating, hiking, and kayaking; play Frisbee; take photos; and go bird watching. When vacationing in the U.S., they hike, downhill ski, play golf, attend live theater, and see the sights. This is the top market for watching college basketball and professional football games. They listen to public and news/talk radio and contribute to PBS. They participate in civic activities, serve on committees of local organizations, address public meetings, and help with fundraising. Many are members of charitable organizations.

**L7 High Hopes** – The *High Hopes* summary group includes *Aspiring Young Families* and *Great Expectations*. These residents are a mix of married couples, single parents, and singles who seek the “American Dream” of homeownership and a rewarding job. Many would move to a new location for better opportunities. Many are young, mobile, and college educated; one-third are younger than 35 years. The median household income is \$46,167, and the median net worth is \$29,162.

- **48 Great Expectations** – Young singles who live alone and married-couple families dominate the *Great Expectations* market, although all household types are represented.



The median age is 33.2 years. Some residents are just beginning their careers or family lives. Compared to the U.S. figures, this segment has a higher proportion of residents who are in their 20s and a higher proportion of householders younger than 35 years. The median household income of \$38,790 and the median net worth of \$20,643 are lower than the U.S. values. Nearly half of the population aged 25 years and older has some post-secondary education; 18 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate degree. Labor force participation rate is 68 percent; most of the jobs come from the manufacturing, retail, and service industry sectors.

### *Preferences*

*Great Expectations* homeowners are not afraid to tackle smaller maintenance and remodeling projects, but they also enjoy a young and active lifestyle. They go out to dinner and to the movies. They do most of their grocery shopping at Wal-Mart Supercenters, Aldi, and Shop 'n Save. They throw Frisbees; play softball and pool; go canoeing; watch horror, science fiction, and drama films on DVD; and listen to country music, classic rock, and sports on the radio. They watch dramas, auto racing, and the evening news on TV. They occasionally eat at Arby's and Dairy Queen. They shop at major discount and department stores. They rarely travel. Focused on starting their careers, they're not investing for their retirement years.



## Projection and Sound Quotes

**CENTRAL  
INTERCONNECT, INC.**

1425 Coit Ave NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

## Quotation

phone 616.458.2999  
fax 616.458.6524

Ramsdell Theatre

Manistee Mi

02/24/11

Page 1

Proposed Ship Date	Date	Person Contacted	Phone #	Customer PO#
		<b>name</b>	<b>phone</b>	
<b>Video System</b>				
Provide and install a complete and working DLP Projection System for the theatre.				
System shall include the following equipment:				
1		6,000 Lumen 720p Data/Video projector with appropriate lens		
1		Blu-Ray DVD player		
1		Projection Stand		
1		Motorized Projection Screen 20' wide		
1		Screen up/dn control in projection booth		
1		Computer video and audio from stage to screen		
1		Audio Feed from Blu-Ray player to existing sound system		
			Installed Price	\$24,130.12
			applicable tax (if any) not included	
<b>option</b>				
		Upgrade projector from 720p to 1080p resolution	add	\$5,789.30
		or		
		Upgrade projector from 6,000 lumen to 9,600 lumen	add	\$24,950.36
		Change motorized screen to fixed frame screen	deduct	\$1,183.00
<b>note</b>				
Electrical outlets by others where needed				
screen shipped prepay frt and bill. Approx \$500.00				
Screen requires coordination with rigging operators				

\* Cancellations Subject to a 20% Restocking Charge

Quote is Valid for 30 Days

This quotation is hereby accepted on this date \_\_\_\_\_  
and submitted as an order.

**Arlen H. Smith**

Accepted by: Name & Title

616-732-1033



# Projection and Sound Quotes

**CENTRAL  
INTERCONNECT, INC.**



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## Quotation

phone 616.458.2999  
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Ramsdell Theatre

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Page 2

Proposed Ship Date	Date	Person Contacted	Phone #	Customer PO#
		name	phone	
<b>Sound System</b>				
Provide and install new BiAmp audio processor with stereo outputs and subwoofer output				
Add new power amplifier to match existing				
Change audio system to stereo				
			Installed Price	\$3,945.01
<b>Control System</b>				
Provide and install a Crestron control system with touch screens at the stage manager location				
and at the sound board. System will control projector power, screen up/dn and				
DVD transport controls.				
			Installed Price	\$4,119.40
Electrical outlets by others where needed				

\* Cancellations Subject to a 20% Restocking Charge

Quote is Valid for 30 Days

This quotation is hereby accepted on this date \_\_\_\_\_  
and submitted as an order.

**Arlen H. Smith**

Accepted by: Name & Title

616-732-1033



## Cleaning and Care

### WARNING:

WHEN USING ANY CLEANING AGENT. ALWAYS FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS ON THE LABEL.  
USE SOLVENTS ONLY IN A PROPERLY VENTILATED AREA.  
NO SMOKING, SPARKS OR OPEN FLAMES WHEN USING SOLVENTS.  
ALWAYS CLEAN AN INCONSPICUOUS TEST AREA FIRST TO DETERMINE COMPATIBILITY.  
CLEANING AGENTS MAY POSE HEALTH RISKS. ALWAYS OBSERVE ALL WARNINGS ON CONTAINERS AND MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS).

The following suggestions are based upon our knowledge and experience. American Seating Company assumes no liability for use of these suggestions since conditions of use are beyond our control. Always test in an inconspicuous area for compatibility.

### Wood Surfaces

To clean, wash with diluted solution of any mild household detergent. Wipe with clean, damp cloth and allow to dry. After drying, apply light coat of paste wax. Polish with clean dry cloth.

**CAUTION: Do not use waxes or polishes containing silicones.**

### Laminates

Wash with solution of any household detergent. Do not use abrasive cleaners. Persistent stains and pen marks can usually be removed with mineral spirits or other cleaning solvents.

### Metal Components

#### Cleaning

Wash the area with a mild (like car wash) detergent and water. If using pressure washers spray with a 25 to 50 degree nozzle with a pressure 1200 psi or less at a distance of a minimum 8" away from the metal surfaces on the chair.

**CAUTION: DO NOT PRESSURE WASH THE HINGES OR SPRINGS – the high pressure water will remove lubricants.**

Persistent dirt marks can be removed with non-abrasive cleaners, such as Bon Ami or Ajax. Rinse thoroughly with clear water, wipe with clean, damp cloth and allow to dry. Chrome parts may be polished with a good quality commercial chrome polish.

Many rusty water stains can be removed using liquid car wax. A non-silicone wax is compatible with the gloss finish and is recommended for this step. (An inexpensive wax works well.) Apply sparingly using a clean soft 100% cotton cloth – extra wax applied means more time to dry and more work removing. Apply light to medium pressure in small circular motion to remove the stain from the surface. Let wax dry to a haze then remove using another clean 100% cotton cloth. For best results do not wax surfaces in direct sunlight.

### Waxing and Polishing

Waxing or polishing is not required but will add luster to weathered finishes. Wait at least a month after any touch up painting before applying wax to those surfaces. Do not wax matte finishes. Either a silicone or Carnauba wax is compatible with gloss base and cured touch up finishes. Clean the surface with mild detergent, and rinse with water prior to waxing. Apply and remove wax using a soft cloth to avoid scratching the finish. For best results, do not wax surfaces in direct sunlight.

### Touch Up Painting

READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS SECTION PRIOR TO STARTING.

#### Weather

Weather must be dry with a temperature at least 50°F, and check to see that it will be dry and be 40°F or greater for 24 hours after painting completion. Humidity should be below 75%.

#### Rust Removal and Protect the Area

Determine if the scratch or chip has started to rust. If the area is rusty, remove all traces of rust. You may



wish to use masking tape (automotive quality) all around the scratch or chipped area to minimize the effected surface. Sand with 220 grit sandpaper to make the area smooth and rust free. If there are rusted areas larger than nickel size, spraying the touch up paint may achieve better results. To apply the spray finish you may wish to consult or hire a practiced painting specialist.

#### **Clean**

Wash the area with soap and water. Allow to dry, then use a wax and grease remover or equivalent product to remove wax, grease and oils from the surface to paint. Make sure the surface is dry before applying paint.

#### **Applying Paint with a Brush.**

Dip the tip of the brush into the paint and wipe away the excess. Do not load the brush with paint as it will dry quickly into a blob on the surface. Apply to the chip or scratch in several thin coats to build up the chip to the same depth as the surrounding surface. Apply in one direction. Let paint dry for ten to twenty minutes between coats. You should use a fine brush for very small areas.

#### **Applying Paint by Spray**

Spraying touch-up paint is best done by a practiced painting specialist using procedures and equipment which are beyond the scope of this document. If you determine that you will be spraying paint follow the instructions supplied with the painting equipment and practice on scrap material to ensure you will achieve good results.

#### **Chair Cleaning**

Wait at least 48 hours after painting prior to any washing. Wash the area with soap and water. Rinse or spray using low pressure water. Do not use pressure washers on repainted surfaces for at least a month after painting. Later, if using pressure washers, spray with a 25 to 50 degree nozzle with a pressure 1200 psi or less at a distance of a minimum 8" away from the chair. Do not spray the hinges – the high pressure water will remove lubricants.

### **Plastic & Laminate Surfaces**

Spray on a hard surface detergent-cleaner. Let stand for 5 minutes, then wipe with a damp sponge. Rinse with clear water and allow to dry.

**CAUTION: Do not use abrasive cleaners or brushes that would mar the surface.**

### **Woven Fabrics**

To clean most woven fabrics first remove all dust and loose dirt with whisk broom or vacuum. Use foam upholstery cleaner or household detergent. After diluting cleaning solution in accordance with directions on containers, pour small quantity into flat pan and work into thick foam with sponge or brush. Apply foam to small area of fabric with brush, sponge or all cotton towel. (Addition of 1 lbs. color safe bleach to 1 gallon of cleaning solution will help brighten colors). **AVOID SOAKING.** Rub vigorously and remove foam with brush, sponge or dampened cloth. When entire surface is cleaned, let dry and then vacuum.

### **Removal of spots or stains from Woven Fabrics - General Directions**

Always use a clean cloth with smallest amount of the recommended cleaning agent. Avoid ring formation by starting outside stained area and working in toward center of soiled area with slow, circular motion. Use light rapid strokes or blotting motions to avoid stretching and pulling wet fibers. Always rinse acid, ammonia, or soap solutions with a damp cloth.

### **Cut-Pile Nylon Plush Velour and Mohair**

To prevent soiling, frequent vacuuming of light brushing to remove dust and grime is recommended.

When soiled, clean with pure solvents (petroleum distillate based products, such as Energine, Carbona, Renzit, Aftalene, or similar products). On mohair fabrics, brush dampened surface in direction of pile several times with stiff brush. When dry, vacuum and brush against pile to restore nap.

### **Blood**

Rub out stain with clean cloth soaked in cool water. If spot remains, repeat the process using household ammonia, then rinse with clean, wet cloth. Never use hot water or soapsuds on blood as they will set the stain.



### Candy, Ice Cream, Fruit Stains, Liquor & Wine, Soft Drinks

Use clear lukewarm-warm water and a clean cloth to soften. Scrape off loose material with dull knife. If stain remains, rub glycerine into stain and let stand for 5 minutes. Rub with cloth or sponge soaked with a 50-50 mixture of alcohol and water. After spot has dried, sponge soiled area with cleaning solvent and rub with clean dry cloth if a water stain remains.

### Chewing Gum, Tar

Moisten gum or tar with trichloroethylene, or naphtha and work off with dull knife. Saturate clean cloth with solvent and rub lightly to remove remaining spot.

### Lipstick, Grease, Oil and Shoe Polish

Using a cloth, apply small quantity of trichloroethylene or commercial spot remover, such as Carbona, Dry-clean, Energine or Renuzit and immediately press a blotter firmly on the spot. Repeat this process using a clean portion of the blotter until blotter no longer shows stain. The dyes in these materials may leave a permanent stain.

### Cut-Pile Nylon Plush Velour and Mohair

To prevent overall soiling, frequent vacuuming and light brushing to remove dust and grime is recommended. When soiled, clean with pure solvents (petroleum distillate based products, such as Energine, Carbona, Renuzit, Nafalene, or similar products). On mohair fabrics, brush dampened surface in direction of pile several times with stiff brush. When dry, vacuum and brush against pile to restore nap.

### Vomit Stains

Remove all debris, then sponge stained area with foam upholstery cleaner until stain is removed. Remove foam with clean damp cloth.

### Urine Stains

Sponge stain with a solution of lukewarm foam upholstery cleaner using clean cloth, then rinse with cold water. Next, use a cloth to apply mixture of one part household ammonia with five parts water. Allow to remain for one minute, then rinse by rubbing with clean, wet cloth. Alternatively commercial pet odor removers with enzymes such as OUT also are recommended to remove odor.

### Ink

Because inks differ in composition, it is impossible to find removers that are equally effective for all ink spots. For most spots, it is necessary to try several methods. Sponge stain repeatedly with alcohol-naphtha mixture (2:1) trichloroethylene, acetone or nail polish remover. Then rub glycerine (use glycerine only with alcohol) into stain and rinse with solvent. If stain is not removed, let stain dry, then wet with water and rub in synthetic detergent to help soften stain; or soak in warm suds containing 4 tablespoons of ammonia to a quart of water. Rinse with clear water and let dry.

### Vinyls (Woven & Non-woven)

To clean, use household detergent with warm water applied from sponge or cloth. A soft bristle brush may be used on textured vinyls. Spray cleaner sprayed on surface and wiped with wet sponge or cloth will also remove most dirt. Before surface dries, be sure to wipe with clean, dry cloth to remove residue.

**Caution: Do not use harsh solvent cleaners as they cause cracking, crazing and general deterioration of the vinyl and thread materials.**

### Removal of Spots or Stains from Vinyl Fabrics

Chemical Fabrics and film are made to withstand scuffing, cracking, peeling, and hard use. Most stains can be removed with a mild soap and water bath and a soft textured brush may be used on textured vinyls, clear water rinse, then wipe dry. Certain stains, if allowed to remain, may become set, making removal more difficult. It is important to remove these stains as soon as possible.

**Caution: Powdered abrasives, steel wool, and harsh cleaning solvents such as toluene, benzene, and trichloroethylene are NOT recommended. They usually cause dulling, especially with glossy finishes. Recommended solvents include alcohol, naphtha, mineral spirits, (use extreme care with these materials and only use in a well ventilated area), mild soaps and detergents.**



### **Ink**

Remove immediately to avoid permanent staining. Use cloth dampened with alcohol. Rinse thoroughly with soap and water as necessary.

### **Chewing Gum, Shoe Polish**

Scrape off as much as possible. (chewing gum will come off more easily if rubbed with an ice cube), then go over lightly with cleaning fluid to remove remainder. No time should be lost in removing shoe polish, as it contains dye which can cause permanent staining. Rinse thoroughly with soap and water if necessary.

### **Nail Polish or Lacquer**

Remove immediately for best results. Pick up as much as possible with dry cloth, taking care not to spread stain. Go over quickly and lightly with non-flammable cleaning fluid. Rinse thoroughly with soap and water if necessary.

### **Paint or Enamel**

Remove immediately with a sponge or cloth dampened with turpentine or naphtha. Rinse with soap and water as necessary.

### **Tar, Asphalt**

Remove immediately. Lengthy contact will cause a permanent stain. Rub gently from outside edge of stain to center using cloth dampened with naphtha or turpentine. This will prevent stain from spreading. Rinse with soap and water.

## **Leather**

### **Care of Leather Upholstery:**

Of all the upholstery materials genuine leather requires the least care. Healed scars and scratches are natural markings. They are the hallmark of genuine leather and an integral part of leather's natural beauty.

To remove almost any stain, wash it according to the following instructions:

Using the mildest of soaps, such as Castile or Ivory, work up suds in lukewarm water. Dip a soft cloth or cheesecloth into suds and wipe surface. Rinse off soap film with cheesecloth dampened in clear water.

Wipe with dry 100% cotton towel or soft cloth.

**NEVER use furniture polishes, oils, varnishes or ammonia water on leather.**

	Manistee Civic Players		Manistee Art Institute		Wedding		The Ramsdell
	June 2011						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	"South Pacific" - 7:30 PM	"South Pacific" - 7:30 PM	"South Pacific" - 2:00 PM
Hardy Hall					Exhibit	Exhibit	Exhibit
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Main Stage					"South Pacific" - 7:30 PM	"South Pacific" - 7:30 PM	"South Pacific" - 2:00 PM
Hardy Hall					Exhibit	Exhibit	Exhibit
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							

	Manistee Civic Players		Manistee Art Institute		Wedding		The Ramsdell
	July 2011						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Stage							
Hardy Hall							
Ballroom						Wissner Wedding	
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Main Stage						Leon Redbone or Lynne Koplitz	
Hardy Hall	MAI Board Mtg. 10:00 AM					Exhibit/Reception	
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Main Stage	Theatre Camp/ Film School	Rehearsal					
Hardy Hall	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
Ballroom	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
Multipurpose	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
Conference	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
Classroom - east	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
Classroom - west	Theatre Camp/ Film School						
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal
Hardy Hall			MCP Board Mtg. 6:30 PM				
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							

	Manistee Civic Players		Manistee Art Institute		Wedding		The Ramsdell
	August 2011						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal
Hardy Hall							
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	"Bus Stop" - 7:30 PM	"Bus Stop" - 7:30 PM	"Bus Stop" - 2:00 PM
Hardy Hall	MAI Board Mtg. 10:00 AM				Exhibit	Exhibit	Exhibit
Ballroom						Mikula Reception	
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Main Stage					"Bus Stop" - 7:30 PM	"Bus Stop" - 7:30 PM	"Bus Stop" - 2:00 PM
Hardy Hall					Exhibit	Exhibit	Exhibit
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Main Stage							Rehearsal
Hardy Hall			MCP Board Mtg. 6:30 PM				
Ballroom							
Multipurpose							
Conference							
Classroom - east							
Classroom - west							





Manistee Civic Players		Manistee Art Institute			Wedding	The Ramsdell	
November 2011							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
Main Stage	Conservatory of Dance	Conservatory of Dance					
Hardy Hall							
Ballroom							
Multipurpose	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Conference	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - east	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - west	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Main Stage				Travel/Adventure Cinema Series		Bridal Expo	Bridal Expo
Hardy Hall				Exhibit/Reception		Bridal Expo	Bridal Expo
Ballroom						Bridal Expo	Bridal Expo
Multipurpose	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Conference	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - east	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - west	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	"Nutcracker" - 7:30 PM	"Nutcracker" - 7:30 PM	"Nutcracker" - 2:00 PM
Hardy Hall	MAI Board Mtg. 10:00 AM				Exhibit/Reception	Exhibit/Reception	Exhibit/Reception
Ballroom							
Multipurpose	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Conference	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - east	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
Classroom - west	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes						
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Main Stage	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal
Hardy Hall			MCP Board Mtg. 6:30 PM				
Ballroom							
Multipurpose	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes				
Conference	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes				
Classroom - east	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes				
Classroom - west	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes	Music/Dance/Art Theatre Classes				

