

Sisters Folk Festival seeks permanent headquarters

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

In the warm afterglow of a successful “comeback” event this month, Sisters Folk Festival has launched into a campaign to secure the future of the 23-year-old organization.

Called “Connected By Creativity,” the campaign is raising funds to purchase the Sisters Art Works (SAW) building where the organization has been headquartered for most of the past two decades. The purchase will enable SFF to further develop the facility as an educational center and multi-use events and performance venue.

The owners of the SAW building, Frank and Kathy Deggendorfer, offered SFF the opportunity to purchase the property at half of its appraised value. SFF hopes to complete the purchase by June 2019. The appraised market value of the property is \$1 million. The Deggendorfers’ gift is valued at \$500,000. With planned improvements and upgrades, an operating reserve and an estimated \$50,000 in campaign costs, SFF needs to raise a total of \$1.4 million (including the

initial donation value) to complete the transaction.

SFF board member and campaign committee co-chair Jay Wilkins told *The Nugget* that, two weeks after launch, the campaign is halfway to that initial goal.

Once the purchase is complete, SFF will potentially continue the campaign with a Phase 2, in an effort to raise an additional \$2.1 million to build a 400-seat year-round performance and community events facility.

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“We’re taking advantage of a fantastic opportunity to expand the ways we serve the community through creativity.”
— Steven Remington

of a fantastic opportunity to expand the ways we serve the community through creativity,” said SFF Development Director Steven Remington.

He noted that the creation of SAW and opportunity

presented to SFF is part of the Deggendorfers’ “significant investment in the creative community in Sisters.”

Actually owning the SAW building, Remington said, will allow SFF to offer “consistent, original programming in our own venue at no cost. We see just owning the asset itself as a stabilizing force for the organization.”

Creative Director Brad Tisdell and board member Wilkins said that having ownership and full run of the building will allow expanded after-school and adult education programming. The facility also holds out possibilities for recording and broadcasting content through podcasting.

“We believe there are more event possibilities that will present themselves,” Wilkins said.

Tisdell said the acquisition “gives us a clean palette to paint what we are and what we do as an organization.”

The campaign has been in the works for some months, as the festival organization sought input from long-time supporters and friends of the festival and its programs.

“We did a sounding-board effort with a consultant that we brought in,” Wilkins said.



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Sisters Folk Festival is raising funds to purchase the Sisters Art Works building, where the organization has been headquartered for 13 years.

That process started with the fundamental question as to whether the organization should even consider owning its own property. That answered in the affirmative, stakeholders weighed in on what they perceived as opportunities and concerns with the project.

“One of the things I heard loud and clear was, ‘Don’t mess up what you’re doing already,’” Wilkins said. “This can’t be a distraction.”

Tisdell noted that SFF modified its plans based on stakeholder input, moving the

idea of a performing/events facility back into a second phase with a looser timeline and with additional scoping to be done.

The response from those directly connected to SFF has been positive. Tisdell said that several festival artists have expressed interest in being involved in a fundraising concert.

The means and scope of fundraising will be broad and inclusive, reflecting the mission and nature of SFF.

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Announcing the future of
Sisters Folk Festival, Inc:

“Connected by Creativity”

We invite you to be
a part of our future.

A Capital Campaign of
the Sisters Folk Festival.

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