

Club helps expand theater

Visitors to the Sandy Mountain Festival will have more of a bird's-eye view at the Birdcage Theater as the result of a Kiwanis Club project.

The Kiwanis Club of Sandy installed another two benches in the terraced arena this spring.

About 150 people can enjoy theatrical, musical and other entertainment from their perch on a total of five benches built by the Kiwanis to date, says project chairman Roy Brook.

"It is kind of a natural amphitheater we're establishing for the city," Brook says about the Kiwanis's most recent work at Meinig Park.

About 15 members have volunteered more than 50 hours of labor on the terracing project the past two years, he says. They erected the lower three benches last year.

Also free of charge were materials totaling nearly \$1,000 in value, including the lumber from Vanport Manufacturing Inc. of Boring, the cement for posts from Sandy Ready Mix, and steel reinforcements and bolts from the Kiwanis.

Human labor costs dearly, Kiwanians joked, with memories of excavating the hillside with shovels, picks and sweat still vivid. They finished the job in mid-May.

"Terracing of the hill by hand was the hardest part," Brook says. Kiwanian Terry Lenchitsky described the operation as a "human conveyor belt."

Birdcage Theater audiences previously used free-standing benches set on uneven ground. Now, "These concrete posts will really make it permanent," says Kiwanian Pete Sulzbach.

The amphitheater arrangement still leaves room for other benches and blankets near the stage, Brook says.

The theater could use steps up the hillside, a backstop for its cement slab stage, or even more terraced benches, members say. But they are unsure which projects they will undertake next.

Meinig Park has long been a Sandy Kiwanis Club service project since a member, the late Spike Emerson, promoted development of the park and cleared land there, says member Howard Berger. That was more than 20 years ago.

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