

Eau Claire Regional Arts Center

Interview Summary/Common Themes

Performing Groups

Positive Aspects of the Facility

- Appreciate being able to perform in what is recognized as the “legitimate” performance space in town. It is good for the audience and the performers. The groups that do all their performances there recognize that it is much easier for their audience.
- The stage often works well, but the size limits some of the work that can be done there.
- Appreciate the staff. There is a strong sense that the staff is really there to assist them and make the performances run smoothly.
- Parking is available, but people don’t always recognize it.
- Groups that use the storage space find it adequate but inconvenient.
- Gallery is a nice space and brings more artists into the building.

Areas for improvement

- Basement restrooms, dressing rooms and storage space need significant improvement.
- Access to the building and within the building is difficult due to the stairs. Groups see an absolute need for an elevator from the basement to the second floor. It needs to be able to move set pieces as well.
- Scene shop in the basement and storage of music stands etc. presents logistical issues of getting things up the stairs to the stage.
- Need larger storage space closer to the stage.
- Lighting is an issue for the orchestra, they are unable to light the conductor or any performers in front of the orchestra. Board could use up-grading.
- Sound, groups generally bring their own because what’s there is inadequate.
- Lobby can be too small for the audience.
- 1st floor restrooms
- Access to the gallery.
- Signage for performances and to recognize the organizations that are part of ECRAC.
- Orchestra provided a detailed list of improvements.
- General repair & maintenance is needed in the public areas.
- Parking is a perceived problem.
- Wheelchair seating blocks the view for the seats behind them.

General

- Need a smaller space for performances. Currently groups that need a smaller space use one of the schools, and other types of space around the city. This is confusing for the audience that doesn’t always know where to go.
- The theatre guild has a new space that has resolved many of the issues that they were facing a year ago. They have included a small performance space in that building.

- A larger reception space for events such as pre & post-show gatherings is needed, would be used for donor events as well. The gallery is ok, but not big enough.
- A gift shop in conjunction with the gallery would allow local artists to sell their work.
- None of the groups is expecting that their use of the facility will increase significantly.

2nd Floor Tenants

Positive Aspects

- Like the collegiality of having a number of arts oriented people & organizations in the same space.
- Individual spaces are generally adequate to meet the needs.
- It provides a sense of permanence and legitimacy

Needs Improvement

- Access, the stairs present major challenges for all of the tenants
- Storage for Youth Choirs is small and poorly lit.
- Sound insulation. Most of have learned to cope, but it could be improved.

General

- Several groups expressed a need for a piano on the 2nd floor
- The cost of the space was what people could afford.
- Groups that would like to use the stage can't afford it and probably wouldn't attract a large enough audience.
- A smaller performing space might be used for recitals and performances, depending on the cost.

Others

Programming

- Opportunities for collaborating with UWEC are limited only by budget. There is a willingness to explore opportunities.
- Basement facilities are an impediment to collaboration
- Need more diversity in the programming to attract diverse audiences and younger audiences.
- Consider a speakers series, maybe with UWEC

General

- It is a real benefit to have all the arts in one location. When the two groups moved out that diminished the impact
- The building infrastructure needs to be addressed or it can't sustain into the future
- There are opportunities for collaboration in promotion, ticket sales, and other areas.
- UWEC has a ticket service that could be used by the ECRAC.