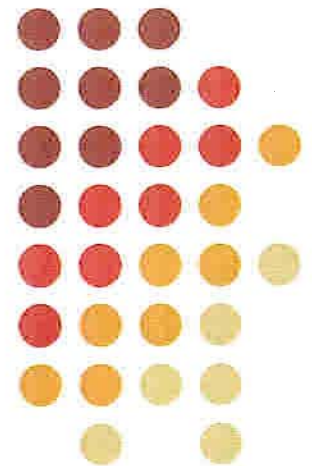


# Auditorium/Black Box Theaters in Libraries: A Mixed Use Facility

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Briefing to  
Quality of Life Committee  
October 23, 2006



# Purpose



- The purpose of this briefing is to outline the operating policies for the Library Auditorium/Black Box Theaters.



## Definition

- A **black box theater** is a simple, unadorned performance space, usually a large square room with black walls and a flat floor. Such spaces are easily built and maintained, and are usually home to plays or other performances with basic technical arrangements--limited sets, simple lighting effects, and an intimate focus on the story, writing, and performances rather than technical elements.



# Background

- The concept of developing dual-use facilities that combined the library auditorium with a flexible black box theater was first developed in 2003.
- The goal of the dual-use facilities was to address broad community needs by providing additional performing arts space in neighborhoods (as identified in the *City of Dallas Community Cultural Master Plan*).
- To accommodate this broader focus, the Library's building program includes alternative space comparable in size to a traditional branch auditorium to allow library programming to continue uninterrupted.
- Arts, Education & Libraries Council Committee was briefed on June 21, 2004, and the branch library locations identified in each quadrant of the City were approved.

# Background



- Four branch libraries funded through the 2003 Bond Program were identified as optimal locations for this initiative:
  - Hampton-Illinois Branch Replacement (opened August 2006)
  - Walnut Hill Branch Replacement
  - Casa View Branch Replacement
  - Pleasant Grove Branch Replacement
- The 2006 Bond Program includes one dual-use auditorium/black box theater at Fretz Park Branch Library.

# Overview of Operating Policies



- Usage / Time Allocation
- Programming Objectives
- Selection of Cultural Users
- Basic Rules of Use
- Staffing
- Fees & Costs



# Overview of Operating Policies



- The Dallas Public Library Meeting Room Policies will form the basis of the policy for the operations of the auditorium/black box theaters, with the addition of procedures to address performing arts programming.

# Dual Usage / Time Allocation



- The auditorium/black box theaters will be **dual-use facilities** managed in partnership by the Dallas Public Library and the Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs.
- Public programs that incorporate both uses will be offered year-round.
- Community and cultural organizations may book the facility pending space availability, technical capacity, room set up limitations, and consistency with the operating policies.



# Dual Usage / Time Allocation



- During four months of the year, emphasis will be given to cultural programs of a longer duration (i.e., a multi-week run of a theater production).
- During extended run performing arts productions, use of the auditorium/black box theater for other activities will be limited.
- Each department will be responsible for providing the appropriate resources for the supported programs.

# Dual Usage / Time Allocation

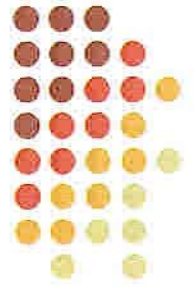


- During 2006/07, the months of **October/November** and **February/March** have been identified for extended cultural programming at the Hampton-Illinois Branch Library.
- During these months, library or other community uses can take place in the classroom space.



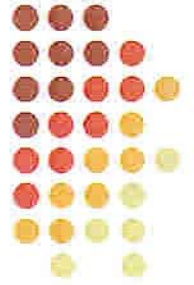
# Programming Objectives

- For cultural programs, OCA will have two primary objectives for the programming that will be presented at the auditorium/black box theaters:
  - Provide neighborhoods with low-cost, family-friendly cultural opportunities.
  - Provide performing arts organizations with professional theater space that allows for the presentation of well-staged productions with quality lighting and sound.



# Selection of Users

- The extended period cultural bookings will be developed through an annual “Call for Entries.”
  - This process is currently in use at the Bath House Cultural Center, the most comparable of OCA’s facilities to the black box theater.
  - Priority will be given to **Dallas-based** arts and cultural nonprofit organizations and artists, particularly those that do not have a permanent performance facility.
- All programs open to the public will have priority over rehearsals throughout the year.
- Other programs will be booked on a first-come, first-served basis following the Library Meeting Rooms Policy.



# Basic Rules of Use

- Consistent with the operations of the other OCA operated cultural centers and with professional practices in the performing arts.
- This information will be provided to all cultural organizations when they apply to book the space.
- Cultural organizations will be able to charge a fee for their programs.
- For the extended run period, the theater will be provided with a basic configuration appropriate for most small and emerging performing arts groups. Any additional set-up and technical changes will be coordinated with OCA.
- User responsible for returning the room to the basic configuration at the conclusion of their event.



# Basic Rules of Use

- Seated capacity limited to 80 to 120 [Fire Maximum is 277].
- Promotion and advertisement must use the following credit lines:
  - This program is sponsored, in part, by the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs.
  - This event is not sponsored by the Dallas Public Library.
- Food and beverages not allowed in the space, unless written permission is obtained from the Library Director.
- Use of tobacco, fire, water and gun props will not be permitted.
- Decorations and props are to be provided by the User and must be removed from the premises immediately after the use period.
- All users must adhere to the laws, ordinances, regulations and Library rules.
- Library Code of Conduct must be observed at all times.





# Staffing

- Library branch staff will have primary responsibilities for scheduling the facility. Library branch staff will also provide staff support to library programs and community events.
- OCA staff will have scheduling responsibilities for the extended-run cultural programs and coordination and technical support for all cultural programs.

# Staffing



- FY06/07 will be a pilot year to determine the level of staffing and resources that will be required to address the technical and space needs from cultural users.
- This year, OCA will provide the staff support with existing resources from our cultural centers.



## Fees and Costs

- Dallas Public Library meeting room fees and costs will serve as basis.
- Fees and costs will be monitored during FY06/07 to ensure that the space is affordable to potential users.



## Fall 2006 Activities

- To introduce the cultural community to the space, a performing arts series was developed for the October/November period.
- OCA staff coordinated programming with partner organizations and Neighborhood Touring Program artists with a focus on family-friendly programs.
- Developed working partnership with Kraig Willis, Hampton-Illinois Branch Library manager.



# Fall 2006 Activities

- Twenty-one programs scheduled from October 14 through November 18.
- Among the cultural organizations performing are:
  - Alegre Ballet Folklórico
  - Dallas Storytelling Guild
  - Echo Theatre
  - Junior Players
  - South Dallas Concert Choir
  - Vistas Film Festival
- Most programs free, with two “pay-what-you-can” programs (donations accepted by arts group).



## Fall 2006 Activities

- Promotional activities for Fall 2006 include:
  - 800 flyers through the Jimmie T. Brashear Elementary School
  - 1,000 flyers through Library system
  - 600 postcards mailed to residents of area zip codes using Ice House and Bath House Cultural Centers mailing lists
- Sent e-mail blast and posted on website.
- Distributed press release through PIO.





## Next Steps

- Finalize operating policies and procedures.
- Evaluate pilot year for “lessons learned.”
- Continue to develop relationship with Hampton-Illinois Branch Library and Jimmie T. Brashear Elementary to maximize leverage of resources to serve community with quality cultural programs.
- Develop and issue “Call for Entries” for Spring 2007 extended-run cultural programs by November 16, 2006.

