

For Immediate Release

Center for the Arts Crested Butte

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Gunnison Arts Center Takes the Time to Get Strong

The Gunnison Arts Center (GAC) is taking some serious time this fall to evaluate its mission, values and objectives, create a formal Three-Year Strategic plan, and restructure the organization in regards to staffing responsibilities and needs. The ultimate goal is to emerge in December as a stronger, more unified organization, better organized to serve the needs of its community members.

Interim Director Jenn Morgan recently fulfilled her six-month contract she had signed with the GAC to help them facilitate the Summer Programming for 2011. Morgan will now be moving forward as planned with some personal career goals. With the slower fall season lending itself to the intense restructuring efforts and in the interim period before hiring a new Executive Director, the GAC's Board of Directors and staff have an opportunity to step back, evaluate and make some positive change for the organization.

Assisting with this transitional period is Jenny Birnie, Executive Director for the Center for the Arts Crested Butte (CFA) and leader of the Arts Alliance, a coalition of nonprofit visual and performing arts organizations working to promote and advance the arts in the East River Valley. As the artistic anchors of the opposite ends of the Valley, the Center for the Arts and the GAC have been collaborating on how the two organizations might work more effectively and efficiently together, both individually as well as through the Arts Alliance. The pre-established relationship paved the way for the GAC to seek assistance from the CFA.

Birnie, with over 20 years of work in nonprofit management, will work as an independent contractor with the GAC for three months from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011. As such, Birnie will assist the GAC in the following areas: Board Member recruitment; budget development; formulating a fundraising plan; creating a new organizational structure; obtaining feedback from focus groups; conducting Board Member training for fundraising; devising a new Strategic Plan; and constructing a public relations strategy.

“The Gunnison Arts Center's Board of Directors is excited to take this time to reorganize the organization to best serve the needs of the community,” says Birnie, “My interest in helping the GAC is predominately through the Arts Alliance, and in making the artistic offerings from Gunnison to Gothic even stronger.”

Additionally, Gail Digate, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of Leadership Learning Systems, a performance consulting firm, is offering pro bono work through her company to help the GAC create a Three-Year Strategic Plan. Digate also comes to the GAC through pre-existing relationships with the Arts Alliance as the Board President of the Center for the Arts.

“My role is to help them re-organize,” says Digate, “And to create a realistic and thoughtful Strategic Plan. The GAC and the Center for the Arts have shared interests and complimentary missions of bringing the arts to life in the valley. We have to look at the valley in its totality. The arts play a positive role in stimulating the economy so everybody wins. Bringing our relationship together in new and meaningful ways will help us make a valuable contribution to the community.”

The Strategic Plan process is one that the CFA itself embarked upon in 2007 with Leadership Learning Systems. Through it, the GAC will emerge with a revitalized Purpose and Mission Statement, Core Values, Core Commitments, Goals, Objectives and an Action Plan for 2012.

As a Gunnison resident invested in the arts, CFA Board Member Heidi Bogart has volunteered to support the GAC staff in moving forward with the changes on the ground floor in facility and programming operations, management of the gallery space, and development of memberships.

“Having personally served on both Boards it is apparent that the Gunnison Arts Center and Crested Butte Center for the Arts share similar missions and goals,” comments Chad Zummach, Gunnison Art Center Board President, “There is an untapped opportunity for the two organizations to share resources and gain efficiencies to better serve the entire valley’s creative needs. We look forward to exploring this collaboration with the CFA as a part of our strategic planning process.”

During this time, core staff Carlie Kenton, Program Manager; Adrian King, Director of Community Relations; and Sheila Anderson, Clay Center Manager, will be maintaining GAC operations. The GAC will operate with reduced hours in order to give the staff and Board of Directors the opportunity to focus on the restructuring. Hours are Thursdays and Fridays from noon until 6 p.m. and Saturdays from noon until 5 p.m. All prescheduled events and classes will proceed as planned.

The new Three-Year Strategic Plan will be unveiled at the Gunnison Arts Center Gala on December 3. The Gala is from 5 to 11 p.m. Tickets are \$40 until October 31 then \$50 through December. They may be ordered by visiting www.gunnisonartscenter.org, by calling 641-4029, or by stopping by at 102 S. Main in Gunnison.