

## Theatre Atchison



Theatre Atchison, in conjunction with other community theaters across Kansas, is asking our legislative body to consider a bill that would make community theaters exempt from paying sales tax on products it purchases to produce live shows and educational programming.

On a statewide spectrum, the amount of sales tax the respective community theaters contribute to the tax pool for Kansas is minuscule in comparison to the benefit it would create when spent back into the respective communities.

Community theaters, like Theatre Atchison, are unique on so many levels. In a very general economic category, we are considered a service industry. By all non-profit standards, we are an arts organization. To Convention and Visitor Bureaus and Chamber of Commerce organizations, we are destination businesses, and to our communities we are a quality of life benefit. Community theaters are a reflection of all of these levels or categories.

As a service business, meaning we provide the service of enrichment and entertainment to our communities through a performance of people acting out stories on a stage, Theatre Atchison spends a little more than 96% of the money it makes and raises back into the community of Atchison. As a non-profit arts organization, meaning we are a 501(c)3 profit tax exempt charity in the theater arts, Theatre Atchison spends a little more than 96% of the money it makes and raises back into the community of Atchison. As a destination business, meaning patrons travel from outside of Atchison to see or be a part of what we do, Theatre Atchison spends a little more than 96% of the money it makes and raises back into the community of Atchison.

Community Theater is, at its base form, exactly what it suggests, Theater for its community. It is not unlike a church or school. Coincidentally, community theaters spend almost all of the revenues they generate on material purchased within communities they serve. Whether it is payroll, accounting services, paint, lumber for sets, or fabric for costumes, the materials are typically sourced locally.

Live theater art companies produce plays that reenact life-affirming narratives about the human condition. Those narratives, or stories, are reflections of life that our audiences find relatable.

Those relatable affirmations help to confirm who we are as individuals, work to assure us as people, and make us reflect on all we do in life. Modern theater has become a more elevated form of storytelling. It is not unlike the stories told before our ancestors discovered fire over two millennia ago. Those simple words and expressions of physical animations are as important now as they were then. Our communicative story telling methods have evolved over the years, however the importance has not changed. Please work to support the established community theater organizations within the State of Kansas

If you have ever seen a Broadway play or a regional theater production in a larger city, then you have watched a professional actor who most likely had their start on a community theater stage. It is no different from a professional athlete who played recreation league ball in their hometown before making it big. We ask that the State of Kansas support the exemption of sales tax so that community theaters can increase its support within our own communities.

*Travis Grossman, Executive Director, Theatre Atchison*