

Artpark thanks community, looks forward to improvements

by Christopher H. Brown

Chairman, Artpark & Co. Inc. Board of Directors

As chairman of Artpark & Company Inc. and on behalf of its board of directors, I want to express our thanks to everyone involved for a very successful season of summer programming this year. Artpark & Co. is a not-for-profit company with a volunteer board whose mission is to enhance the visual and performance arts at The Earl W Brydges Artpark. We operate pursuant to an agreement with New York State Parks whom, along with our many corporate sponsors, we view as our partner in making Artpark a world-class destination.

Special appreciation goes out to the residents of the Village and Town of Lewiston. We realize that our signature “Tuesday in the Park” programming’s overwhelming success has, at times, put considerable stress on these wonderful communities. We have worked hard during the off-season with Supervisor Reiter, Mayor Collesano, the police and fire companies, and State Parks to develop improvements designed to have more patrons parking in Artpark lots versus village streets and to move the aftershow traffic out of the village efficiently. While we believe great strides have been made this season along those lines, this is an ongoing effort of high importance to us. That is why we are hopeful that the first phase of our amphitheater improvement project will be ready in the spring of 2012.

For many years, we have been desirous of having the ability to be flexible with our amphitheater series so as to enable paid admission for various performances while still offering free shows. This has eluded us because the amphitheater is an open area with no practical means of ticketing patrons to help offset the cost of the great acts we book each season. Its present design also makes it difficult to control the number of patrons at the events. We have also wanted to improve the patron experience by upgrading various health and safety issues and making access to concession areas easier. The first phase of our amphitheater improvement project will help accomplish these goals immediately.

Our plans call for a fencing system and slight reconfiguration of the basic layout so that we can move toward a paid admission model for shows that demand the same by virtue of their popularity. This will allow us to limit the capacity for each event to sizes we know are manageable and will allow for a more enjoyable patron experience while maintaining the high level of performances we have become known for at Artpark.

The amphitheater redesign also addresses health and safety issues along with much-needed infrastructure issues related to electric, water and sewage. Walkways will be enhanced and access in and out of the venue greatly improved. The side of the hill from our upper lots will be made safer and more user-friendly, and our concession areas will flow more smoothly. We will, of course, continue to offer our popular family and children’s programming in conjunction with the various performances.

This is an exciting time for us at Artpark & Co. Our board, staff and generous volunteers are anxious to improve our offerings while remaining good corporate neighbors to the wonderful residents of Lewiston. We believe we have contributed to making Lewiston a major destination to thousands by attracting people from all walks of life through our programming. We intend to continue our close working relationship with the village, town and all stakeholders, and welcome everyone’s comments and support. We are looking forward to a community appreciation day next spring in hopes of familiarizing those not familiar with the park and the programming we offer, and to showcase the improvements to those who are already familiar.

Again, we thank the residents of Lewiston, the thousands of patrons, the numerous volunteers without whom we could not function, the village and town boards, along with our corporate sponsors and partners at State Parks for making Artpark a remarkable success story in which the best chapters are yet to be written. We look forward to continued success for years to come.