

SHERIDAN COUNTY
APPLICATION FOR ONE CENT OPTIONAL TAX FUNDS

FISCAL YEARS 2011 TO 2015
(July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: WYO Theater, Inc. **PHONE:** (307) 672-9083 ext. 102
CONTACT PERSON: Nick Johnson, Executive Director **ADDRESS:** PO BOX 528, Sheridan, WY 82801
AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED: \$40,000 **AMOUNT APPROVED:**
TAX STATUS: 501(c)(3) **FEDERAL ID NO:** 74-2254851 **EMAIL:** execdir@wyotheater.com

DESCRIBE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION: Originally built in 1923 as the vaudeville theater *The Lotus*, the WYO Theater provided live performances and film entertainment to audiences in Sheridan, Wyoming for over 60 years. When the theater closed its doors in 1982, the Sheridan community rallied to rescue and renovate the historic landmark, forming a funding network and collaborative partnerships that endure today. With \$28,000 of private funds raised by Save the WYO, Inc. (now WYO Theater, Inc.) and \$98,000 of city funds the City of Sheridan purchased the theater in 1983 and commenced leasing the building to WYO Theater Inc. for ten year periods at \$10 per year. After raising more than \$1.5 million in private funds WYO Theater Inc. reopened the completely renovated WYO Theater on November 10, 1989. The WYO has now been providing live entertainment, cultural enrichment, and educational opportunities to the greater Sheridan community for twenty years. In FY 2008-2009, total attendance at events held at the WYO Theater was 28,306, up from 25,138 in FY 2007-2008.

It is the mission of the WYO Theater to be a regional performing arts center that inspires, educates and entertains. This mission arose from a desire to bring professional quality performing arts events to the small communities of Sheridan and Johnson counties and to rural areas in nearby Montana. Many community events and activities supplement the WYO Theater's annual season of 20-25 diverse, high quality performances by professional artists and companies. The WYO is available for rentals by local, state, and national organizations or individual artists and promoters, for debates, meetings, lectures, seminars, dance recitals and beauty pageants, to name just a few. Many of these functions are fundraisers for which the WYO provides ticketing, box office, technical, customer service and marketing services at a fraction of the actual cost. The WYO's box office also serves as a ticketing outlet for events held at other Sheridan area locations.

DESCRIBE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SELECTION PROCESS: A nominating committee solicits applications from potential new board members and evaluates applicants based on interest and expertise in theater and related production facilities, knowledge of financing and fundraising, community participation, etc. The nominating committee submits nominees to the Board of Directors for a vote of the full Board.

NO OF BOARD MEMBERS: 13 **TERM:** 3 years

LIST NAMES OF BOARD MEMBERS:

Susan Miller, <i>Chair</i>	Lawrence G. Gill, M.D.
Andrew F. Hall, MD, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Ronald J. Kensey
Mickey McNickle, <i>Treasurer</i>	Jerry Pilch
Gene Sturlin, <i>Secretary</i>	Rock Sathre
Susan Baker	Pat Tomsovic
Georgia Boley	Cheri Wilson
Richard M. Davis, Jr.	

BRIEFLY LIST PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES FOR REQUESTED FUNDS (Indicate if the funds are to be used for an operational subsidy or for one-time expenditures such as a project or equipment acquisition or capital improvements; indicate whether other sources are available and been applied for; indicate the reason County, rather than the City, Optional One Cent Sales tax funds are appropriate; if possible, estimate the number of citizens that will benefit):

Optional One Cent Sales Tax funds will be used for general operational expenses for the WYO Theater. Specifically, funds will be used to offset projected budget shortfalls due to economic pressures including reduced philanthropic giving, reduced ticket sales, public resistance to increasing ticket prices, and escalating utility and maintenance costs. Although overall attendance at WYO events has increased, much of that increase can be attributed either to events benefiting other community organizations or to increased attendance at free matinees and other free events. In addition, in-use days for the WYO continue to increase with the growth of educational outreach efforts and the addition of new events such as Vaudeville (featuring local talent) and a Western Film Festival.

In years past, the WYO Theater has consistently raised sufficient funds to cover its operations through ticket sales and fundraising events. The WYO Development Committee researches and applies for grant dollars to fund specific program expenses for artists, workshops, and artists in residence to round out both the annual Season Series and the annual Children's and Family Education Series. While the WYO will continue to seek out new funding opportunities and solicit funding from traditional sources, many of those sources have significantly curtailed their giving due to the recent economic downturn. While it is expected that such giving will rebound in the future, bridge funding is needed to allow the WYO to maintain a consistent level of service to the community in the interim.

Recent drops in ticket revenue and rental income would seem to indicate a lack of market tolerance for increases in ticketing prices and rental rates.

OBLIGATIONS:

ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURES OF APPROVED FUNDS (Indicate amount per year and years for which funds are requested):

AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
1. \$10,000 per year	General operating expenses including utilities, maintenance, and other specific expenses including staff time spent to provide ticketing, box office, technical, customer service and marketing services for fundraising events to benefit other area nonprofits.

Funds are requested on an annual basis for fiscal years 2011 – 2015.

GOALS AND BENEFITS TO THE SHERIDAN AREA COMMUNITY RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURES LISTED ABOVE:

Requested funds will be used to continue to meet the needs reiterated by the Sheridan County community over the years in various community assessments and studies, including:

- *Community Assessment* conducted by Wyoming Rural Development
- *Economic Development Strategic Plan* developed by Forward Sheridan economic development alliance
- *Economic Inventory, Assessment, Strategy and Work Plan for Sheridan, Wyoming* developed by Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.

1. **WYO Theater Season Series** - The WYO Theater's annual performing arts series consists of approximately 15-18 events featuring the highest level of professional touring artists we can bring to the Sheridan and Buffalo area. The Season Series also includes a gala benefit musical and a joint theatrical production with Sheridan's Civic Theater Guild. These two events are produced by the WYO

Theater and feature a cast of local talent. Requested funds would allow the WYO to continue to maintain a full complement of performances for the Season Series.

- 2. Children's Educational and Family Series** – In addition to the Season Series, the WYO's annual performance season includes 7-10 events in the Children's Educational and Family Series. Each year since 1998, the WYO has presented this series to enhance the artistic education of area young people and their families. The Children's Series consists of 7-10 free matinee performances at the WYO, plus in-school workshops and residencies for students of all ages. This outreach utilizes the high-quality national touring groups or individual artists featured in evening performances at the WYO.

The WYO developed the concept of the Children's Educational and Family Series to augment the arts education available in the county's schools. In Sheridan County schools, most students currently receive valuable instruction in music, some instruction in drama, and no instruction in dance. Children's Series matinees help to emphasize to students the importance of studies in the arts by bringing them into contact with top professional performing artists. Hands-on, in-school workshops further reinforce the value of the arts to students' overall education.

In FY 2009-2010, students attending free matinees or attending free workshops or performances in schools through the Children's Educational and Family Series totaled over 4,000. Over 450 young people participated in performances at the WYO Theater through Tandem Productions, WYO Theater productions (Christmas Carol, etc.), Studio 48 Dance School, Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow, NSI, Easter Seals, Vaudeville shows, YMCA Theater camp, etc.

Requested funds would allow the WYO to continue its practice of offering this important educational supplement at no cost to students.

- 3. Support to Community Organizations** – In keeping with the WYO's mission goal to serve as a regional performing arts center, the WYO supplements its annual series offerings by making its facilities available to other area organizations for fundraisers and other events. It is the goal of the WYO to maintain this practice while continuing to offer a reasonable fee structure to other area nonprofits conducting fundraising activities. The WYO provides ticketing, box office, technical, customer service and marketing services for such events.

Community organizations making use of these services include:

- Tandem Productions/YMCA Arts and Humanities
- Easter Seals
- Kiwanis
- DA Davidson
- Normative Services
- Civic Theater Guild
- Cloud Peak Symphony
- Sheridan College: No Frills Theater Co. / Student Activity Board / Foundation
- Studio 48 Dance School
- Miss Wyoming Scholarship Pageant
- Sheridan Housing Action Coalition
- Sheridan Arts Council
- Sheridan Memorial Hospital Foundation
- Sheridan County Fair Foundation
- Sheridan Senior Center
- Sundowner Lions Club
- Pastors United in Christ

Requested funds would allow the WYO to continue to offer these services at a reasonable rate.

DESCRIBE LAST YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND BENEFITS ATTRIBUTED TO CURRENT ONE CENT OPTIONAL FUNDS RECEIVED (If applicable):

The WYO Theater has not previously received One-Cent Optional Sales Tax funds.

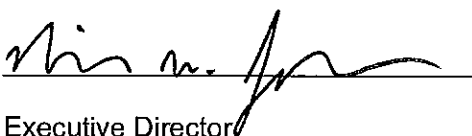
PLEASE INDICATE IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS APPLYING FOR THE CITY OF SHERIDAN OPTIONAL ONE CENT TAX FUNDS. IF SO, THE AMOUNT REQUESTED AND FOR WHAT YEAR(S) AND PURPOSE.

Because roughly 66% of WYO Theater attendees live within the city limits of Sheridan, we will request \$20,000 of the estimated \$30,000 per year in needed Optional One Cent Sales Tax funds from the City of Sheridan. Those funds will be used for the purposes listed herein.

****PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF YOUR LAST FISCAL YEAR AUDIT (Or a Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement).**

****PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF YOUR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR BUDGET.**

****PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THE LATEST IRS FORM 990 (If Applicable).**

SIGNED: 
Title: Executive Director
Date: 4/1/10

Please complete this application. You may provide additional information if you wish.

Supplemental Information:

- 2009-2010 Season Series Brochure (includes Children's Educational and Family Series events)
- Excerpt from *Economic Inventory, Assessment, Strategy and Work Plan for Sheridan, Wyoming* developed by Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.