



118 S. Paul St. ▪ Woodsfield, OH 43793 ▪ 740-472-4848

www.visitmonroecountyohio.com

Creating Unity through Creative Expression

August 2023

Greetings to all of those art enthusiasts who continue to support a variety of art experiences in Monroe County! Monroe Arts Council is the parent organization for Monroe Singers, Monroe Artists, Monroe Writers (Write Away!) and MC Players. The Council also operates the Monroe Theatre and the Arts & Tourism Center at 118 S. Paul St. in Woodsfield.

The Monroe Arts Council continues to work diligently to support our local artists, performers, local craftsmen, contractors and audiences showcasing local talent and bringing new experiences from outside the county.

The Monroe Arts Council was recognized at The Ohio Statehouse at the 11th Annual **Appalachian Heritage Awards** event hosted by Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area. These awards recognize inspiring practices in the region.



Honorees at the 2022 Appalachia Heritage Luncheon
MAC President Mick Schumacher received the award.



Improvements have been made at the **Arts and Visitors Center** this year through a grant from the Monroe County Community Foundation. New sidewalks and a handicap entrance have been added to enhance accessibility. Monroe Artists hosted the **Annual Art Exhibit and Rewards** in April.

The **Creative Expressions Gift Shop** provides a wide variety of local artisan selections for sale. The Center has also offered workshops, events and book signings with local authors and a writing contest through the **Write Away! Program**.

The Arts council has also been collecting funds to continue restoration work on the interior of the **Buchanan Chapel**. Completing the Chapel roof project has allowed us a chance to catch our breath once we stopped the water damage. Estimates

have been secured to restore the tin ceiling in the chapel; fifty percent of the funds are secured to restore the ceiling at this time.



Monroe Singers reorganized under the co-direction of Karen Elliott and Chris Durigg with a new accompanist in Kelsey McBride. They provided a holiday concert and a “cool” 1960s decade of music spring event and are to perform at the Monroe County Fair.



A grant from **The Ohio Arts Council** facilitated development of a new Monroe Arts Council web site with details on the varied programs under arts and tourism in one centralized location. Visit us www.visitmonroecountyohio.com. Be sure to follow us

on Facebook too at www.facebook.com/MonroeArtsCouncil.

The **Monroe Arts Council annual scholarship** was presented to Cheyenne Riley. The Suzanne Pollock Scholarship was established to recognize Mrs. Pollock and her influence in education in our local school district as well as her efforts in establishing the Monroe Arts Council.

The scholarship is designated for a qualifying senior student from the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District pursuing an education in an arts related field. The field of study may be a two or four-year program. This year’s award was partially funded through earnings from the scholarship endowment.



We have promoted Monroe County’s **Tourism** assets through a variety of ongoing regional advertising and through development of a Monroe video through the Ohio Tourism cooperative advertising program. We also partner with the Ohio scenic byway program with our Appalachian Byway and Ohio River Scenic Byway. Monroe County is also now part of the Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia, a regional

organization focusing on trail development in the Wayne National Forest.



Work continues to progress at the **Historic Monroe Theatre**. Never in our wildest dreams would we have expected to be where we are today when we decided to “throw a band on stage” for Alumni Weekend in 2019.

Since that time, thanks to individuals willing to write grants for us, we have been able to secure close to a million dollars in grant funding for the theatre and other art programming! This funding has provided a total roof replacement, replacement of all of the windows to period specifications, exterior masonry repairs, installation of four new furnaces with A coils for air conditioning, installation of two ADA family restrooms on the main floor and development of the concession area. Soon the balcony project will go out to bid which is also a grant funded project. The balcony project will boost our seating from 299 to close to 600. A theater with 600 seats is the “sweet spot” for Nashville and larger shows which allows ticket pricing to be more affordable by spreading the price of the show across a larger audience.

We have submitted an application to put the Historic Monroe Theatre on the **National Register of Historic Places**. This has been an interesting process which we hope to finally get accomplished. This designation could open the door to historic tax credits which can be instrumental in funding restoration projects.

We have also spent many hours with planners who will be submitting a grant application for funding through the \$500 million available across the 32 Appalachian counties in Ohio. We were also awarded a \$135,000 State Capital Budget grant to help with a sprinkler system.

We will soon be announcing our “**Legacy Giving**” plan for the **Monroe Theatre** which we hope will spur another level of support for preservation of the Theatre.

In the meantime, we continue to work with volunteers and local contractors to accomplish small projects throughout the Theatre. Electrical, plumbing and plaster upgrades are taking place daily with very little break in programming. Our patrons have been very patient with us as they see we are trying to improve the Theatre one step at a time. Many times we are at the mercy of the contractors with time available as well as supply chain situations. It is difficult to continue demolition, drywall, painting and other such projects with a show in the evening. It is the plan we have chosen and it is working as our loyal patrons can see first-hand, our accomplishments week to week or month to month.

Even with volunteer labor, supplies and materials are costly. A single gallon of paint is around \$60. We try to use volunteer labor when we can but many times we must employ professionals to facilitate permitted upgrades.



Our “**Name-a-Seat**” project raised around \$70,000 for seats on the main floor, which has continued to allow us to leverage projects, paying for them up front until we can draw down grant funding when appropriate.

At this time we have not needed to borrow money or mortgage any of our properties to facilitate improvements. That has been a wonderful thing but that time may happen if we are not aggressive enough to secure funding for matches for grant funded projects.

We just received the invoice for air conditioning which is waiting on electricians to power up. \$16,000 for installed units does not include wiring and labor for electricians. The lack of air conditioning has hampered our attendance this summer. We are closer than we were to completing our HVAC project for the auditorium.

Three large windows have been installed on the ground level which takes our building back to the original historic appearance. These areas are now being utilized as Theatre concessions and ADA family restrooms.

We continue to partner regionally with other theatres as we share marketing information and restoration resources. We continue to be humbled by the community support and financial contributions we have witnessed.

We continue to encourage sponsors for our programming, whether at the Theatre, at the Arts Center, the After School Program or our Arts Outreach classes. It is a wonderful thing to see community support for our “quality of life” art programming. **Let us know where you would like to make an impact in your community.** We can help direct your support! Thank you for your continued support and the confidence you have shown throughout our efforts!

In Creative Expression,

Mick

Mick Schumacher, Arts Council President

Monroe Arts Council Annual Membership

Name: _____

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Yes, I'd Like to Volunteer: