



MEDIA ADVISORY

OFFICE of the MAYOR | RALPH BECKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Art Raymond
801-547-2659

Community Forum to Cover Challenges, Strategy and Success of Performing Arts Venues *Experts from Denver, Durham and Dayton join Mayor Becker for public dialogue*

SALT LAKE CITY – As far back as the '60s, Salt Lake City leaders recognized the need for a world-class performance space downtown that could play host to a broad spectrum of entertainment possibilities, including traveling Broadway, and enrich the arts landscape for the entire region.

Now, as the Utah Performing Arts Center moves toward fruition, Mayor Ralph Becker and the Downtown Alliance are pleased to invite the public to a community forum to hear about how recently constructed performing arts venues from around the country changed their communities for the better.

Please join Mayor Becker and representatives of the Schuster Center (Dayton, OH), Durham Performing Arts Center (Durham, NC) and Denver Center for the Performing Arts (Denver, CO) for a community dialogue on Wednesday, Sept. 28 at the downtown Salt Lake City Main Library's Tessman Auditorium at 7 p.m.

Participants will hear about the challenges, strategies and successes that accompanied each of these projects and how they changed the cultural landscapes of their host communities. Attendees will also have the chance to talk to panelists and Mayor Becker in a moderated question and answer session.

“As we continue to move forward with this exciting project, there are many lessons we can garner from other cities that have recently grown their cultural opportunities with new performing arts space,” Mayor Becker said. “Not only can we hear about what worked and what didn't on these ventures, we have the advantage of seeing and hearing about the profound and positive changes that each of these communities now enjoy.”

EVENT: Utah Performing Arts Center Community Forum

WHO: Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker
Reginald James Johnson, interim director, North Carolina Department of
Community Development
Ken Neufeld, operator, Schuster Center
Randy Weeks, president, Denver Center for the Performing Arts

WHERE: Salt Lake City Main Library
210 E. 400 South

WHEN: Wednesday, Sept. 28, 7 -9 p.m.

Panelists

KEN NEUFELD, President and CEO of Victoria Theater Association, Operator of the Schuster Center in Dayton, Ohio

Mr. Neufeld is a 28-year veteran in executive management of performing arts centers, professional theatre companies and civic museums in the United States and Canada. He has developed a national reputation for successfully diversifying audiences and expanding programming to include underserved and nontraditional audiences. A creative thinker in dealing with economic downturns and urban revitalization, Mr. Neufeld has a reputation for being a collaborative arts and community partner with a track record in studying ways to share services for increased efficiency.

REGINALD JAMES JOHNSON, Interim Director of the Durham, North Carolina Department of Community Development

In addition to his Community Development responsibilities, Mr. Johnson is the liaison to Durham's two city-owned theatres – the 1,000-seat Carolina Theatre built in 1926 and the 2,800-seat Durham Performing Arts Center (DPAC), the largest theatre in North and South Carolina. From November 2003 through August 2011, Mr. Johnson was the senior assistant to the Durham city manager, advising Durham's city manager on public policy and management issues and serving as the city manager's liaison with the City Council and the Durham community.

RANDY WEEKS, President of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Mr. Weeks' past titles include Executive Director of Denver Center Attractions and Theater Operations Manager for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. His career has been highlighted by securing Denver for the openings of the national tours of *A Chorus Line*, *Sunset Boulevard*, Carol Channing in *Hello Dolly!* and Disney's *The Lion King*, as well as the pre-Broadway run of Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. In addition to presenting up to 22 Broadway touring productions a year, Mr. Weeks added cabaret productions in the Garner Galleria Theatre to Denver Center Attractions' offerings in 1992. He is a member of the Independent Presenter Network and serves as a Governor for the Broadway Theatre League.

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