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## **Effingham County's Mars Theatre Awarded Grant Funding to Support Special Art Projects**

ATLANTA – The Georgia Department of Economic Development's Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA) and House Majority Leader Jon Burns (R-Newington), State Representative Bill Hitchens (R-Rincon) and State Senator Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) recently announced that the Mars Theatre was selected as a Vibrant Communities Grant recipient. Mars Theatre was awarded \$3,000 in grant funding to support arts programming.

“I would like to commend the GCA’s commitment to encouraging economic development through special art grants, and I would like to thank my colleagues in the General Assembly for allocating these funds to the GCA during the 2019 legislative session,” said Majority Leader Burns. “Since the Mars Theatre reopened in 2014, it is impossible to imagine our community without its concerts and events, and with the help of the GCA’s grant, the theatre will continue to bring joy to the Springfield area.”

“The Mars Theatre is one of the only live event venues in the Effingham County area, and it provides a unique place for our citizens to support and enjoy the arts within our community,” said Rep. Hitchens. “This venue is an asset to our area, and I look forward to seeing how this funding will further enhance this dynamic space.”

“I am grateful for the funding MARS Theatre will be receiving as a result of the Vibrant Communities Grant,” said Sen. Hill. “The MARS Theatre serves as a wonderful cultural hub and as a place for folks around our community to watch films, see concerts and host events. I look forward to seeing their business continue to prosper and add to our community.”

“The Vibrant Communities Grant, along with our new Cultural Facilities Grant, have allowed GCA to support some of the most impactful arts programming happening in communities of all sizes throughout the state,” said Karen Paty, executive director for GCA.

“These grants invest not only in the cultural infrastructure, buildings, classrooms, theatres, museums, that support the creation of great programs, but also the downtowns, libraries, community centers and schools that invite Georgians to connect with one another and with meaningful arts experiences in their everyday lives.”

The Vibrant Communities Grant, which ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000, supports single art projects such as an art exhibit, a theatre production, a series of workshops for children or an artist residency. Additionally, the Vibrant Communities Grant is available to organizations in counties that did not receive a Fiscal Year 2020 Project, Partner or Arts Education grant. This grant has a match requirement of 50 percent of the requested amount, and the awarded projects must take place from October, 2019 – June 30, 2020.

The GCA received a total of 133 applications for the Cultural Facilities Grant and the Vibrant Communities Grant from arts organizations, schools, libraries, cities, historical societies, community theatres, Boys & Girls Clubs and more. The GCA awarded more than \$570,000 in grant funds to 79 entities in 58 Georgia counties.

Following a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) precedent, the Georgia Council for the Arts used Peer Review Panels to adjudicate applications. These panels included fellow professionals who are experienced in the arts discipline or type of grant being reviewed or are Georgia citizens with a record of involvement in arts activities, experience and knowledge.

The mission of GCA is to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts. GCA provides grant funding, programs and services statewide that support the vital arts industry, preserve the state's cultural heritage, increase tourism and nurture strong communities. Funding for Georgia Council for the Arts is provided by appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on the Vibrant Communities Grant, please click [here](#).

For more information on the Georgia Council for the Arts, please click [here](#).

*Representative Jon Burns represents the citizens of District 159, which includes Screven County and portions of Bulloch and Effingham counties. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 2006 and currently serves as House Majority Leader. He also serves on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs, Economic Development & Tourism, Ethics, Game, Fish & Parks, Rules and Transportation committees.*

*Representative Bill Hitchens represents the citizens of District 161, which includes portions of Chatham and Effingham counties. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 2012 and currently serves as Chairman of the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee. He also serves on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and the Defense & Veterans Affairs, Economic Development & Tourism and Transportation committees.*

*Sen. Jack Hill serves as the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He represents the 4th Senate District which includes Bulloch, Candler, Effingham and Evans counties and portions of Emanuel and Tattnall counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.656.5038 or by email at [jack.hill@senate.ga.gov](mailto:jack.hill@senate.ga.gov).*