



DELPHI OPERA HOUSE

Economic Impact Statement

2015-2020

The Delphi Opera House has had a significant economic impact on the City of Delphi and the surrounding area from its opening in September 2015 to now in November 2020. The Opera House with its 30,000 attendees has revitalized the downtown, providing a popular venue for arts, entertainment, weddings, reunions, historical, and cultural events.

About the Delphi Opera House

The 1865 Assion-Ruffing City Hall was named for its third-floor auditorium which opened in June 1865 with a ball for soldiers returning home from the Civil War. The grand hall was converted in 1882 to the Lathrope & Ruffing Opera House, soon known more simply as the Delphi Opera House. Many notables performed on its stage including soprano Marie Litta, Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley, Hi Henry's Minstrels, among others. The 121-member strong Delphi Dramatic Club offered monthly productions.

Following a theater fire in Lafayette in 1914, the Delphi Opera House was closed by the fire marshal for having only one exit. As the decades passed the theater became a storage room for shipping crates, store displays, and discarded merchandise. Its fine wallpapers faded and tore; leaks in the roof dissolved plaster medallions; pigeons roosted on the balcony railing.

The Delphi Preservation Society purchased two-thirds of the City Hall in 1996, acquiring the remaining third in 2007. During



its first fifteen years of ownership, the all-volunteer Society listed the building in the National Register, completed a feasibility study, commissioned a structural analysis, a decorative arts analysis, and architectural schematic design work.

Three National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grants administered through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology helped fund the stabilization of the main roof truss (2000), restoration of the building's facade (2007), and replacement of its roof (2011).

In 2012 the City of Delphi was selected as an Indiana Stellar Community. The Delphi Opera House was the centerpiece of the projects included in the City's Stellar application. The official groundbreaking was August 20, 2014 for the \$4.375 million project that doubled the size of the historic structure with a three-story addition to the rear. Stellar grants

from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority provided \$2.675 million with the Delphi Preservation Society pledging to raise the remaining \$1.7 million. A loan from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority enabled the Society to push forward with the restoration while launching an ongoing capital campaign to achieve its project share.

The Delphi Opera House reopened as a performing arts venue and community center in September 2015—just 13 months after the start of construction! The grand reopening recreated the Civil War ball that was the first event in the building. Now fully accessible, the facility is operated by Delphi Opera House, Inc. which develops, implements, and manages programming for the venue. The Delphi Opera House is a cultural landmark for Delphi and Carroll County, with a significant economic impact on the local community.



The Grand Reopening in 2015 was celebrated with a Civil War Ball, recreating the first event held in the building in 1865.

Five-Year Economic Impact...

Economic Impact
More than **\$3 Million** in
first 5 years of operation!

Impact of Visitor Spending

31,466 visitors attended ticketed events at the Delphi Opera House between October 2015 and March 2020, spending an average of \$50 per event for tickets, food and beverages at local restaurants, and concessions at the Opera House. This totals **\$1,573,300** of economic impact for the local community resulting from Opera House events.

Additionally, 60 special events, including wedding receptions, banquets, reunions, and parties were held at the Opera House during this period. In addition to the rental income to the Opera House of \$65,407, these events created \$504,000 in revenue for local caterers, florists, event coordinators, rental companies, DJs and musicians, sound technicians, and photographers. This totals **\$569,407** of economic impact for the local community and surrounding area from special events.



DELPHI
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Impact of Opera House Expenses

Over these five years, the Delphi Opera House paid:

- \$313,680 to performing artists;
- \$190,187 to personnel;
- \$114,791 for contract services;
- \$68,248 to local businesses to cover expenses such as concessions, advertising, and printing

And, the Delphi Preservation Society paid:

- \$131,653 for utilities (including \$7,710 to the City of Delphi);
- \$57,662 for insurance;
- \$64,250 to local contractors for painting, repairs, and maintenance.

This totals **\$940,471** of economic impact from operating expenses paid by the Delphi Opera House and Delphi Preservation Society.



Jeff Daniels proudly displaying his signature on the stage wall

Business Community Impact...



A crowd waits with anticipation for a show to begin



John McEuen — one of two performances!

“ All DOH events bring a significant influx to the success of the Brick and Mortar Pub. Located just a block from the theater, we are a popular spot to have a nice dinner before and after events. The Pub follows the DOH event calendar to adequately staff ourselves for the upcoming shows. I believe both of us benefit each other for enhancing tourists to our historic town.

I have attended several shows, sponsored events, rented the property for our daughter's wedding reception this past June, and have provided significant donations to the DOH. As a local business owner, I want to see the continued success for the DOH and all those who contribute time and efforts as well!

The Delphi Opera House gives our small town that "Big City" feel as streets and sidewalks come to life! Local business owners are lucky to have this venue in our back yard to validate a benefit to our profitability. ”

—Peter Circle, Owner, Brick and Mortar Pub and The Sandwich Shop



Carrie Newcomer 2016



The Concession Lobby is a bustling place during intermissions!

Cultural Impact for the Community...



Red Brick Theater's production of "1940's Radio Hour"

“ In the last five years, the Opera House and the Delphi Public Library have worked together to produce over a dozen shows featuring the talents of hundreds of community members. For many actors and audience members, this is their first experience with live theater. Viewing and participating in community theater can be a life-altering experience, especially for young people. Some may have the opportunity to flex their artistic muscles for the first time while others will learn compassion, patience, and creative thinking. Through these live theater experiences, the Red Brick Theatre and the Delphi Opera House offer an experience and benefits that can't be found on a screen. ”

—Portia Kaprun, Director, Delphi Public Library



More than 50 community members gave voice to the Crescendo Choir



Red Brick Theater performs "Over the River and Through the Woods"

Impact on Youth in our Community...

“ It has been so rewarding to watch the growth of the Opera House in our community. At first, it seemed like a huge, impossible undertaking and to see what we have now is simply incredible. The effort that has gone into making this project a reality and now maintaining it is a tribute to the members of the Delphi community.

The Opera House has afforded our students wonderful cultural opportunities. Without it, students would have to travel to Indianapolis or Chicago to get the same experience. Students have volunteered at the Opera House to usher, take tickets, clean up, and help behind the scenes in shows. It is rewarding to see students volunteer and interact with the adult volunteers and performers.

My family has been in several shows at the Opera House. What a great opportunity to showcase some great local talent. Again, these same opportunities would have to be found out of town if it were not for the opera house. I appreciate having the Delphi Opera House in our community and all it has to offer. ”

— Jay Dennison, Band Director, Delphi Community High School



Choirs and musical ensembles composed of local residents and students consider the Opera House a big city performance venue in their hometown.

A school tour with students in rapt attention as an impersonator portrays Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley who performed at the Delphi Opera House more than six times.



Now more than ever, we must preserve the Delphi Opera House...

In just five years the Delphi Opera House has become a centerpiece and source of pride for Delphi and the surrounding community. The impact of the Opera House goes beyond its economic impact which has revitalized the downtown square. Its impact can be felt on the cultural influence that has rejuvenated the arts in Delphi and created a space that encourages artistic expression through music, drama, art, and more.

With more than half of all patrons for any given show coming from outside the county, the Opera House has put Delphi on the map and made it a destination. The Opera House is a gathering place for community and social events, meetings, classes, reunions, wedding receptions, as well as theatre and concert events.

The Delphi Preservation Society is committed to maintaining the 150+ year legacy of the Delphi Opera House, celebrating its past along with the extraordinary Wabash and Erie Canal Center, Adam's Mill, and other historic Carroll County destinations. Even more, DPS is committed to preserving the Opera House for future generations.

Now more than ever, we must ensure that history, art and culture are preserved.

