

Luhrs Circle of Friends Benefit Gala Reception Remarks
Friday, April 9, 2010

Thank you for being here tonight and welcome to our Masquerade gala that kicks off our annual fundraising drive for the Luhrs Center.

Our attendance at the gala tonight is the largest to date with 131. We deeply appreciate this support, especially during these challenging economic times. But during times like these, people still look for exciting and diverse entertainment opportunities and they know they can find those right in their own backyard at the Luhrs Center.

We are still gathering figures on how much has been raised through our Circle of Friends, but we have already raised more than \$41,425 and know that will increase. In the next several months, we will have the opportunity to contact our many friends and supporters in the region to encourage them to renew their support or to become new members of the Circle of Friends. I'm pleased to say that we have 321 Circle of Friends members (couples included), a 13 percent increase over last year's total.

Your support of this outstanding center by attending our performances and through the annual Circle of Friends contributions has made the Luhrs Center THE premier performing arts center in our region. Your contributions help to cover some of the production costs associated with these wonderful performances, and most importantly, help to keep ticket prices affordable for as many people as possible to enjoy live performances. (The University's financial commitment also helps to cover some of the Center's operating budget.)

I'm also very pleased to announce that the Luhrs Center continues to exceed all our expectations. Now, they are expectations we didn't even know we had!!! The box office has sold more than 113,000 tickets since the Luhrs Center opened in 2006. Over 196,000 people have attended a performance, University function, or a private event since the Luhrs Center opened. To date, there have been 26 sell-out performances, and with the outstanding programs we have planned for next year, that number will only increase as the facility becomes the cultural center for the region.

Shippensburg University is also pleased to have WITF as the presenting media sponsor for this evening's event.

Finally, we'd like to recognize WITF, CBS 21 and WAYZ FM as our media sponsors and our corporate sponsors—Boyer and Ritter (with partners Chuck Nebel, Chuck Frame and Ed Straley) and Capital Blue Cross. We thank you very much for your partnership with the Luhrs Center and Shippensburg University. Thank you again for being here and for supporting this magnificent facility and this outstanding university!