

An artist's rendering of the front of the Hide House Theater of the Tannery Arts Center on River Street.
TANNERY ARTS CENTER

Hopes high to close theater funding gap

TANNERY ARTS CENTER: Anniversary event will include tours of hide house

Tanner 125
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SANTA CRUZ — As the Tannery Arts Center prepares to celebrate its fourth anniversary, supporters are hoping to narrow the fundraising gap for a theater that will complete the historic leather-making site's rebirth.

The renovation of the Salz Tannery hide house into a venue for the Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre and other performing arts is estimated to cost \$5 million. Supporters have raised \$3.2 million to date but need another \$1 million, or 85 percent of the total cost, to begin construction.

"We are trying to build it to be accessible for drama, music and dance," said George Newell, the center's executive director and a founding board member. "Each one of those activities has its own specific requirements."

The public will be able to tour the 1956 redwood-encased structure, where cow hides were once stored, during the center's "Tanniversary" party June 15. From 3-9 p.m., the River Street campus will offer open studios, performances, exhibits and an artists' faire.

Once completed, the 200-seat Hide House theater will represent the final piece of redevelopment for the tannery, which operated for 145 years before closing in 2001.

The city bought the 8.2-acre site in 2005 and partnered with Minnesota nonprofit Artspace Inc. to build 100 affordable housing units, which opened in 2009. Last year, the tannery's historic beam



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

The former Salz Tannery hide house will be rebuilt as a performing arts center, with an entrance incorporating the large leather tumbling drum at left, shown in the artist's rendering above.

IF YOU GO 'TANNIVERSARY'

WHAT: Fourth anniversary of the Tannery Arts Center
WHEN: 3-9 p.m. June 15
WHERE: Tannery Arts Center, 1050 River St., Santa Cruz
DETAILS:
www.tanneryartscenter.org

house and tanyard buildings were painstakingly rebuilt as working studios, and earlier this year the Cultural Council moved into the 147-year-old renovated Kron House that belonged to the former tannery operators.

The City Council approved

permits for the theater renovation in April. The 6,000-square-foot structure will feature a new 2,000-square-foot lobby but otherwise be preserved to the greatest extent possible, Newell said. That includes a barn-style door that acts as the front entrance and salvaged internal redwood beams.

The theater will also feature 70 additional flexible seats, state-of-the-art acoustics and dressing rooms. Outside, there will be a courtyard that features a town-hall style stage for outside performances.

Lisa Palm, a former board member of two public schools, said a key reason she got involved in fundraising for the theater is its

SEE TANNERY ON A2

TANNERY

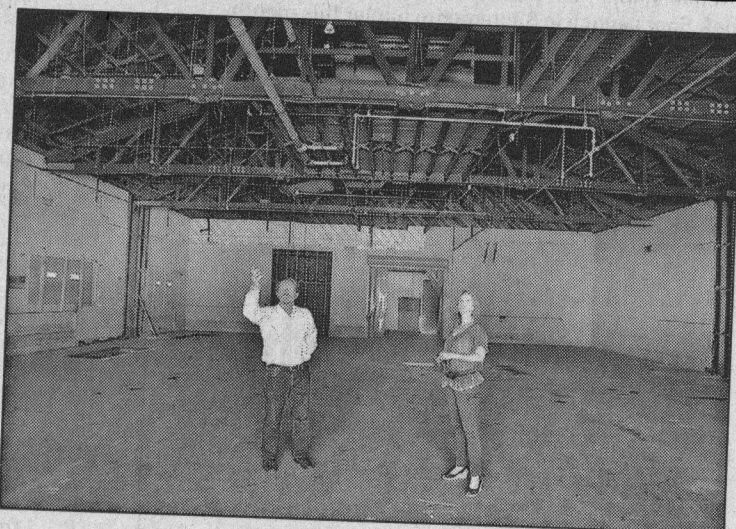
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aim to provide for children's activities and education. Local schools are often forced to rent performance space.

"The theater will be a state-of-the-art space which will also be affordable to our local children and families," Palm said. "Besides reaching youth, the Tannery Arts Center is becoming a destination for tourists when they come to Santa Cruz County."

Santa Cruz's Devcon Construction is undertaking the renovation.

"The tannery was an important part of the region's past and the city's culture for a very long time," Devcon architect Andrew Giba said. "Saving the site and converting the buildings to an art center says a great deal about the city's values and vision."



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Tannery Arts Center Director George Newell and Communications and Development Officer Ann Hazels check out the interior of what will become the Performing Arts Center.

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