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Wachovia Makes Major Gift to Community Arts Center



From the September 11, 2003 Blowing Rocket Newspaper: On hand when Wachovia Bank officials announced a grant of \$250,000 to The Blowing Rock Community Arts Center's Capital Campaign last week were (from left to right) Wachovia Regional President for Mid-Carolina, Mark DeMarcus; Kim Johnson, Building Committee Chair for the Arts Center Board of Directors; Chip Williamson, President of the Arts Center

Board of Directors; Rita Davis, Finance Center Manager for Wachovia's Blowing Rock branch; Wallace Greer, Marketing President for Watauga County; Loretta Link, Executive Assistant for the Art Center; and Will Spence, President of Carolinas for Wachovia. The quarter million dollar grant will be presented over the next five years.

The Wachovia Foundation announced a grant of \$250,000 to The Blowing Rock Community Arts Center's Capital Campaign last week, sending the total raised thus far in excess of \$6.3 million, only \$1.7 million short of the \$8 million goal.

"Wachovia is committed to improving the quality of life in all of the communities we serve," said Wallace Greer, Wachovia's Market President for Watauga County. "The Arts Center is a tremendous undertaking that will not only provide support to our local arts and community programs, but will also have a direct impact on local education and economic development."

Greer announced the award at a press conference Tuesday, September 2 at Wachovia Bank's Blowing rock branch, located on North Main Street.

The Wachovia Foundation is a private foundation that is funded annually by the Wachovia Corporation. It provides grants to eligible 501c (3) tax-exempt organizations in four primary areas: Education, Community and Economic Development, Arts and Culture, and Health and Human Services. The mission of the Wachovia Foundation is to build and sustain strong and vibrant communities, improve the quality of life, and make a positive impact in each region the Wachovia Corporation serves.

Like Wachovia, one goal of the Arts Center, according to Board Chair Chip Williamson, is to enhance education by facilitating access to and participation in cultural experiences for people with limited income, as well as to ensure the availability of a broad array of artistic opportunities that reflect a diverse community. "The new 26,500 square-foot facility will provide a permanent home for a number of arts groups and will host live theatre, dance groups, musical performances, visual arts displays and children's theater workshops," he said.

The grant proposal was presented to the Wachovia Foundation by Mariam Cannon Hayes, Honorary Chair for the Campaign, and Chip Williamson, Chairman of the Arts Center Board of Directors.

“The Arts Center will make quality programming available to a broad cross-section of the community and enhance educational opportunities for your people,” said Williamson.

Mrs. Hayes also expressed her gratitude that Wachovia would provide such generous support for the project.

“We greatly appreciate this substantial commitment from the Wachovia Foundation,” Williamson said. “We are pleased that they share our vision of the Arts Center as a regional center that will greatly enhance the quality of life in the High Country with a special emphasis on educating children about the arts. Actions always speak louder than words, and this action clearly displays what the new Wachovia is all about.”

Echoing Williamson’s comments, Mark DeMarcus, Regional President, Wachovia Bank, NA stated, “Although Wachovia is a large corporation, we truly strive to be your home town bank.”

With this gift, contributions to the Blowing Rock Community Arts Center Campaign now total \$6.3 million. To recognize the Wachovia Foundation’s generosity, the Arts Center’s Green Room will be named “The Wachovia Foundation Green Room.”

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