

Herald Citizen

Showtime! Cain Center opens curtain on design

By jdeem@lakenormanpublications.com on June 04, 2020



An architectural rendering depicts the vision of the Cain Center for the Arts theater as the regional hub for world-class performances.
Courtesy of Cain Center for the Arts

CORNELIUS – The organized effort to create an arts and performance destination for the Lake Norman region and beyond stepped into the wings for a few months as the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, but latest releases showing the vision for the theater, gallery and other community spaces has put the Cain Center for the Arts campaign back into the spotlight.

On Tuesday, the last of three online unveilings on the Cain Center's YouTube channel depicted the main performance venue of the facility designed as the anchor of a reimagined and vibrant arts and culture district in the heart of Cornelius. And the multi-faceted nature of the center – with performance, exhibit and classroom space along with indoor and outdoor venues for special gatherings and festivals – combined with the anticipated rejuvenation of surrounding areas is part of

the plan establishing an arts and cultural hub serving more than 300,000 people in a four-county area around and near the lake.



The main gallery is expected to be a showcase for the arts as well as an artistic setting for special events. Courtesy of Cain Center for the Arts

The most recent depictions of the building, designed by partnering architectural firms C Design and Holzman Moss Bottino Architecture, highlight the 400-seat theater and art gallery envisioned at the Cain Center. Previous weekly releases have focused on exterior views, outdoor spaces – including a performance stage, community green space and a large public plaza – as well as the lobby area and classrooms.

Staged reveals of what the Cain Center will include were designed to remind area residents that COVID-19 hasn't blurred the vision for the arts and cultural project while re-energizing the push to complete the final stages of a \$25 million fundraising campaign.



Classes and gatherings for all ages are part of the planned programming for space inside the center. Courtesy of Cain Center for the Arts

“The team of volunteers, donors, town leadership, and design and construction experts who have brought us to this exciting moment has been incredible,” Cain Center for the Arts President and Board Chair Greg Wessling said when the three-week unveilings began. “They’ve been hard at work for over two years, pouring over designs, researching best ideas, and ensuring that this center will be an accessible, innovative, and beautiful crown jewel for the region.”

And after the first video was released, showing the outdoor gathering places and building design, Executive Director Justin Dionne said the goal for the week-to-week unveilings was to drive home the message that despite disruptions caused by the pandemic, the Cain Center campaign kept moving.

“The momentum never stopped,” Dionne said, adding the two-year fundraising drive, initially boosted by voter approval of a \$4 million Cornelius municipal bond package and enhanced by several private and corporate contributions – including a \$5 million donation from Cornelius residents Bill and Ericka Cain – continues to make progress toward the \$25 million goal.

The demolition of downtown Cornelius buildings to clear the Cain Center site is the next anticipated major step toward making the center a reality. A public demolition/groundbreaking ceremony was originally scheduled in May, but was delayed due to the virus. Dionne said revised plans call for the celebration to be held this fall.

Completion information about the project and ways to contribute are available at cainarts.org.



A mirrored studio for dance classes will be one of the special features of the building envisioned as the anchor for a vibrant arts district.

Courtesy of Cain Center for the Arts