



# Statement from the Executive Director of the Carson Center

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I am now writing my third letter to the stakeholders in the Four Rivers region in this, our third, Annual Report. It comes as a surprise to me, more than you, that I have been here over three and one-half years now and have no immediate plans to leave this area. There are many challenges ahead and I look forward to sharing the successes (as well as the occasional disappointment) with you.

If you have not already done so, I hope you make a point of collecting these reports from year to year. It is my mission for you to see growth in our financial well-being but, more importantly, in our influence upon this region and especially our young people. I trust you have read the final Statement from the Chairman, John A. Williams, Sr. When I interviewed for this position, I looked at the existing Financial Statements at that time, was certain the challenges were overwhelming, and was certain the next Executive Director, whoever that person turned out to be, had an impossible task ahead of him/herself. I then had a lengthy conversation with John Williams. Suffice to say, I would not have come here had it not been for his insights, business acumen, and stern determination that the Carson Center could not, and would not, fail. He lived up to every statement he ever made and went far beyond those on a daily basis. He not only made things happen, he, along with his lovely wife, Vivian, personally helped to dig this organization out of dire straits. I hope each of you will join me in thanking John for getting this organization onto the operating table and bringing it back to life.

Now, Mike Stone becomes Chairman. Mike has the energy, eagerness, and enthusiasm to move us forward. And Mike, like John, loves the Carson Center and believes in its importance to the good people of our region and its future potential.

You will read in the audit that we had a less successful season than our previous fiscal year. We had shattered many widely held beliefs that a new performing arts center could not show a surplus in the first five-to-ten years when we closed the books one year ago with a surplus. We did not fare as well this past fiscal year. I take responsibility for our programming not having been as successful as we had budgeted. This staff continued to work exceptionally hard to overcome this challenge. As a result, we ended the year with a Loss from operations and support of (\$90,832), less than 3% of all Operating revenue and support. However, my goal is to operate the Carson Center on a breakeven or better basis. Our Balance Sheet continues to look healthy and I intend to improve upon it.

Please note the statistics quoted in John and Mike's letters. They once again magnify and emphasize how large an economic development engine the Carson Center is for this region. This city, county, and region would be negatively and significantly impacted without this center.



## Statement from the Executive Director of the Carson Center (cont.)

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One item you will note in the audit that I must amplify is the over 6,400 hours contributed by our dedicated and loyal volunteers. If it became necessary for us to pay for all the services provided by these volunteers, we would be many years away from breaking even. They are the heart and soul of this organization.

I intend to develop unique cultural activities that will bring families as well as high school and college students into the area. Beginning in the summer of 2010, I will assemble a festival of performing artists unlike anything that has been witnessed in this region. It is my desire that we will have one group of performers on the lawns outside the Carson Center on 14-foot fiberglass poles upon which they will sway to fro to extreme angles in syncopated rhythms. Their choreographed movements will tell a story without words. Another group will perform an outdoor spectacle, performed on stilts and a 22-foot aerial truss, which will transform them into an amazing kinetic sculpture. Yet another troupe will be in the theatre to perform another free event for families and young adults as they will tell the story of Frankenstein with brazen physical humor and razor-sharp humor. This weekend of free activities for young people, families, dates, and young-at-hearts can only happen with considerable city, county, state, and federal support in addition to significant sponsorship support. I hope you will support this effort and will help us insure that it becomes an annual event.

Additionally, I want to expand programs in the Myre River Room to engage our young people with upcoming musicians, songwriters' nights, and open mikes for comedy, poetry, storytelling, and more.

We had 376 events here last year. We hope to have many more than that this year and every year hereafter. Many marvelous moments have been shared here; there are many more special opportunities to be shared together in the years ahead.

As I mentioned in my letter a year ago, the Carson Center improves the quality of life just a little for some each day but, more importantly, the quality of life in this region is gradually being enhanced for generations to come.

I look forward to seeing you at the Carson Center!

Brian J. Laczko  
Executive Director