

SECTION B | Friday, April 22, 2011

LCTC Set For Its 50th

Theatre Group
Preps For Its
New Season,
Changes To
Dakota Theatre

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If you had asked a small group of theatre fans 50 years ago what their hopes for Yankton's infant Lewis and Clark Theatre Company (LCTC) were, most likely you would have received answers along the lines of wanting to continue the theatre tradition that Yankton College had cultivated; perhaps more likely, it was just plain fun for everyone.

Had you asked them if they expected that same dream 50 years later to be a vibrant, growing centerpiece in downtown Yankton, the idea probably wouldn't have entered their minds.

"There is a familiar quote that says, 'All great things are only a number of small things that have carefully been collected together,'" said LCTC executive director Chuck Lambertz. "That idea is no truer than when looking at the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary season this year. In 1961, when the Lewis and Clark Playhouse was developed, the group did not even have a facility. They used the boathouse at the lake and the Garden Terrace Amphitheater on Yankton College's campus. But, they pushed forward and developed their first season — two shows — for summer 1962."

Now entering its 50th season, LCTC has expanded the number of season shows to six and offers a range of extra performances, including concerts, lectures, contests and much more throughout the year. The group has built a costume shop that features more than 10,000 items and a props shop second to none in the state.

"We have benefited in that we have always had a very active group of supporters in the community," Lambertz said. "That support has been what has given us the opportunity to continue to grow and expand, from building the first playhouse at the lake in 1964 to having a group of citizens buy the Dakota Theatre in 1990 and give it to us in 1991 for our permanent home. That generosity, year by year, is what has helped us to grow to be one of



Lewis and Clark Theatre Co. executive director Chuck Lambertz stands in front of the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton, which has served as the LCTC's home for 20 years. The group's 50th season launches in June with the "History of Yankton" pageant, followed by the musical "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." (Shauna Marlette/P&D)

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CHUCK LAMBERTZ

the best community theaters in the region, not just the state."

Beginning in June, the 2011-2012 season will kick off with a special free show celebrating both the 50th year of the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company and the 150th year of Yankton.

"The first show is called 'A History of Yankton,'" Lambertz said. "This will be the third time

it is being performed in Yankton. It was originally written and performed in 1904. It was performed in the 1960s at the celebration of the 100th anniversary, and now we will be performing it again this summer."

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