



**THE DRIVER OPERA HOUSE RESTORATION, INC.
AND
THE DRIVER OPERA HOUSE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

250 Main Street • P.O. Box 62
Darlington, Wisconsin 53530

October 31, 2013

Board of Directors

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Brian D Nodolf, President
Elmer G Biddick Charitable Foundation
Biddick, Inc.
11623 State Road 80
Livingston, WI 53554

Dear Mr. Nodolf:

On behalf of the Driver Opera House, thank you for the opportunity to submit this grant proposal for consideration by the Elmer G Biddick Charitable Foundation. Our application along with supplemental information is enclosed.

We are requesting a gift totaling \$15,000 to be paid over five years for the restoration of the Driver Opera House in Darlington, Wisconsin. \$6,000 would be applied to Phase One of the restoration; \$9,000 would be applied to Phase Two.

Dedicated members of the Darlington community have spent the past several years developing a nonprofit organization, acquiring the building and beginning arts and cultural programming in our community through the Driver Opera House Center for the Arts. The Board is excited to go on to the next phase: the actual restoration of the Driver Opera House into an accessible, welcoming educational and cultural center for the community and surrounding counties. We hope you will be a part of the restoration.

We believe that the restoration of the Driver Opera House is consistent with the mission of the Biddick Foundation, and hope that you will find it in the interest and budget of the foundation to support our request. If I can provide additional information to encourage consideration of our request, please feel free to contact me at (608) 574-3137.

I and other members of the Board of Directors would also be happy to personally meet with your committee to present and discuss this proposal and our work to restore the building and grow the educational and cultural community in Darlington and southwest Wisconsin.

Sincerely,


Stan Krahenbuhl

11/1/2013 I left a voice mail message at the organization listed phone number. I said the request would be considered at the next mtg. Also, left my cell#
Daniel B. Biddick
Peggy J. Biddick
James W. Neuendorf
David Warner

Elmer G Biddick
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
11623 State Road 80 Livingston, WI 53554
Phone (608) 943-6363 Fax (608) 943-6365
www.biddickfoundation.com

Brian D. Nodoff - President
Rachel L. Jordan - Vice-President
Bradley D. Biddick - Secretary/Treasurer

GRANT APPLICATION. Due Dates April 15th and November 1st

Date: October 30, 2013
Name of Organization (must match IRS 501(c)(3) designation) The Driver Opera House Restoration, Inc.
Address 250 Main St., P. O. Box 62
City, State, Zip Darlington, WI 53530-0062
Phone 608-776-2040
Person Responsible for the Grant Stan Krahenbuhl
Position in the Organization President of the Board of Directors
Organization's Purpose Our mission is to restore the Driver Opera House and ensure the long term viability of the Driver Opera House Center for the Arts as the cultural center of the Lafayette County community.

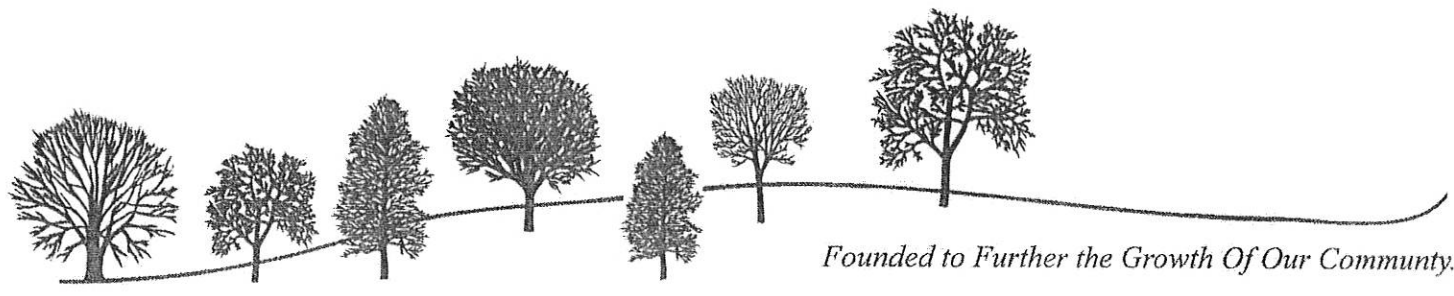
This application must include your organization's latest IRS Letter of Determination showing exemption and public support status. (Not required for units of Government & public schools).

Grant Request \$ 15,000.00 to be paid over 5 years

Describe the reason for this grant request in the space below:

Please see the attached.

-Application continued on next page-



Describe the reason for this grant request in the space below:

The Driver Opera House Restoration, Inc. seeks a grant from the Elmer G Biddick Foundation to assist in restoring the Driver Opera House, a two phase project that will preserve an important historical structure in downtown Darlington. It is expected that a restored opera house will provide accessible space for educational, cultural and community events for Darlington and the surrounding communities. In addition, this restoration will be an important catalyst for additional economic development in Lafayette County's county seat.

Driver Opera House Restoration, Inc.

Grant Application to Elmer G Biddick Charitable Foundation

October, 2013

Supporting Information

Specific use of grant: Funds from the Biddick Charitable Foundation would support the goal of this campaign: to restore the physical structure of the Driver Opera House to its original beauty. The first floor will be flood proofed to allow the safe use of the building for retail in the busy Darlington downtown. The second story will be returned to public space used for educational and cultural programs as well as theatrical performances and space for other community and private events.

Time Schedule: The project will be accomplished in two phases.

The first phases includes acquisition of the Opera House, and then, work to floodproof the property as required by state and local floodplain ordinances, insuring the building will be safe in the future. The Board of Directors acquired the building in December 2012 for \$195,000 with a land contract with the prior owner. The land contract is serviced by monthly rental income from the first floor property. The remaining costs for Phase One include architectural, engineering and constructions costs estimated to total \$757,000.

The organization has secured a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for \$543,000, covering 70% of the floodproofing cost. The remaining 30% of the cost is the responsibility of our organization, and we plan to challenge local businesses, organizations, foundations and individuals to contribute the remaining \$214,000 required for construction. The organization expects to raise all funds for Phase One so that work can be completed by late 2014.

Architectural Network, Madison, Wisconsin, an architectural firm with an extensive portfolio of restoration work, is currently finalizing the plans for Phase One. Work on Phase One is expected to begin in January, 2014 and be completed by October, 2014.

Phase Two of the project includes restoration of the interior of the building, as well as the exterior shell, auditorium and community facility and retail spaces. An elevator is part of the plan, resulting in fully accessibility to all spaces. The cost of Phase Two of the project is estimated to be \$1.67 million.

Fundraising for Phase Two is expected to begin in 2014. The Phase Two work will include the restoration of interior spaces to the building's former beauty. Color renderings of the interior space are included in the folder we have provided for the foundation board. It is hoped that work on Phase Two will begin in 2015.

Other sources of funding: Fundraising for Phase One has begun. Every member of the Board of Directors has already donated financially to the project. Prospective major donors have been identified and the organization is in the quiet phase of securing major gifts.

In addition, a 100 Women Initiative was an unqualified success. The plan was for 100 Women to each give \$100, raising \$10,000 to kick off the community's participation. In the end, 111 women signed on to the Initiative, raising \$11,100.

As well, for Phase One, farmers in the area will be participating in the Banking on Bushels Campaign. Lafayette County is blessed with an abundance of excellent corn growing land, and an effort has begun to secure commitments from approximately 20 area farmers for donations of 200 bushels of corn. It is hoped that this effort will raise more than \$15,000.

Describe the effect of postponing your request to another time: Funds required for Phase One are needed to provide the 30% match for the DNR grant. The contract with the DNR requires that the floodproofing work being funded by the grant be completed by the end of 2014. It is clear that if we postpone our request for funds for Phase One, it will be too late to meet the challenge from the DNR.

Describe who, when, how and where will the effects of this grant be felt: Restoring the Driver Opera House will primarily benefit residents of Lafayette County. The second floor opera house has a flat floor that will make the space flexible for multiple community uses.

The board envisions a space that would be used for educational and cultural events such as dance lessons, workshops, artists' space as well as a place for family events like reunions, weddings, graduation parties and the like. The growing Hispanic community has expressed interest in using the space for educational uses for adults and children such as art, music, acting or cooking classes in both Spanish and English. The Driver Opera House Center for the Arts will provide space to local theatrical groups

to stage live performances as well as serve as a venue for community events and activities.

The restored Driver Opera House will also be an economic generator in the community and the region. Experts in the real estate industry maintain that when a community spends money on its downtown, it signals to private investors that it's safe for them to do the same and that their investment will be more secure, leading to additional new businesses in the downtown.

Historic preservation helps save dollars and promotes recycling by using existing buildings and infrastructure. It encourages a move back to the downtown and neighborhoods around it by enhancing what's already there.

As part of the restoration process, local history will be recorded to preserve the memories of those who were involved with the Opera House in the past. Many area residents now in their eighties and nineties, including WWII veterans, remember the Opera House stage and ballroom where they danced and courted their husbands or wives. These recorded histories will become a part of the Driver Opera House collection and reflect our commitment to the cultural and historic value of this building.

The quality and depth of education and the arts are an important factor used by many businesses and individuals when deciding to locate to a community. Darlington already is known as a 'quality of life community'. A restored opera house will only make it more so.

Organization's history, activities, services and composition.

Built in 1883 by Josephus Driver, the patriarch of a prominent Darlington family, the flat floor Driver Opera House is on the second floor of a two story building constructed of Milwaukee cream city brick. The first floor was used then, as it is now, as downtown retail space. After hosting travelling theater groups for much of its early history, the Opera House held its last dance, sponsored by the American Legion, on St. Patrick's Day in 1951.

Since then, while the Opera House has not been altered, its physical structure has deteriorated and, along with its unique architectural details, is in urgent need of repair. Further, its location in the flood fringe of the Pecatonica River requires it to be flood proofed before actual restoration can begin. The Driver Opera House is a contributing property in Darlington's Main Street Historic District.

For 75 of its nearly 130 years, the Driver Opera House served as the cultural center of Darlington. Our mission is to restore the opera house and ensure the long term viability of the Driver Opera House Center for the Arts as the cultural center of the Lafayette County community.

Our vision is a building that is treasured in the community as a space for local and regional theatrical performances as well as a venue for community educational and cultural events and activities such as dance lessons, poetry recitals, music performances, storytelling, creative workshops and other public gatherings. The fully accessible space would be available to families and businesses in the community for receptions, workshops and meetings.

A diverse group of committed citizens forms the Board of Directors of the organization, individuals who simply care about the historical and cultural life of Darlington. An Advisory Council has been established to assist the board in its efforts. The project has the support of local governments and the Darlington Main Street/Chamber of Commerce who all recognize the value of preserving this important piece of history in a space that enlivens the educational and cultural life of the community and provides important economic support for downtown retail businesses.