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Project Update Statement by Bob Fox

It has been some time since The Capitol Theatre has given a comprehensive project update and so we would like to do that today.

I would have liked to be here today to announce that The Capitol Theatre has finalized financial arrangements to initiate the final phase of construction. I would have liked to have been able to announce that a finalized construction plan has been completed. But a project of this complexity is not undertaken without careful planning, solid agreements and long range vision. Although since 1999, when this project began in earnest, it may seem that a long time has passed without progress, this just is not so. Over the last three years this organization has worked tirelessly to secure funds required without public institutional loan guarantees – an unprecedented feat in Ontario and certainly not an easy one. Even more challenging is to marry the structural engineering requirements with technical requirements to arrive at a fully comprehensive construction plan – a prerequisite of any institutional financing.

Though you may not see much activity walking by on King Street, a great deal of progress is being made inside the theatre and even more progress has been made across the street in our offices above the Scotiabank. With the help of the Credit Union syndicate hosted by Unigasco we have negotiated and signed a letter of commitment with the lending partners and are still in process of finalizing the details of implementing the contract. This has been a monumental achievement and continues to be challenging work each and every day. At this

time I would like to publicly thank the Board of Directors for personally signing as guarantors for this loan.

On the construction front, much progress has been made as well. A contract with Intrepid General for the services of Flo Mandarino as our construction manager is in the final stages of negotiation of some legal nuances. During this negotiation, Flo generously continues to provide his time to keep our momentum. Even now, Flo is consulting with our engineers in a final construction and engineering review. Once these results are tabled, we will be able to send the remaining bids out to tender which will provide the basis for a finalized construction plan and exact cost estimate – both a prerequisite of any institutional financing. Though this plan is not finalized, our engineers and construction specialists estimate that there are twelve to fourteen months of full construction required to complete the project. Also, though not supported by tendered bids, the final project is preliminarily estimated to be approximately \$9.4 million. When this construction begins is still unknown based on the details of the factors listed above. As always, the devil is in the details. I would like to assure everyone that as soon as we know, you will know. Similar theatre projects in Canada have taken as many as 15 years to complete due to the particular nature of theatre construction, engineering and technology. This project is moving along as fast as possible but we are not inclined to force this project faster than is advisable to suit intermittent publicly voiced criticism which may come our way. However, our doors remain open to all who would like to come in and participate with their efforts, questions, opinions and vision.

As far as the financial aspect of the theatre, I would like to outline some of the key sources of support. From 2001 to 2004 the Municipality generously donated \$1 million some of which was used for a joint purchase by the Capitol and the Municipality of the Municipal parking lot at the rear of the building. In conjunction with the Government of Canada, \$4 million has been used to retrain over 150 formerly unemployed individuals, the vast majority of whom have gone on to full time employment following their training. The Province of Ontario has committed \$466,000 to aid in the reconstruction of a heritage building. But the real story

here is that private citizens and businesses have committed approximately \$2.5 million. Of that over \$1.6 million have been committed personally by the Board of Directors and the staff of the Capitol and that does not begin to include the extra time that they volunteer evenings and weekends for this project or the special efforts that they make to support and participate in other community building efforts throughout Chatham-Kent. This is an extraordinary group of people that deserve the thanks and gratitude of our community. Also in this regard, I would like to thank personally each and every one who has contributed to this project, from volunteers, to members, to donors, up to the staff and the Board of Directors.

To date, though not even completed, the Capitol Theatre has added over \$20 million to the local economy. So far over \$6 million dollars has been granted or donated to this project – dollars that would not have otherwise come to Chatham-Kent. Over \$5 million has been spent in the local construction industry which has had a spin-off economic boom of over \$15 million – spin off business that would not have otherwise existed in Chatham-Kent. We expect similar results over the balance of the construction phase and far greater benefit over the life of the theatre.

The Capitol Theatre staff and Board of Directors hold a philosophy that attractive and vibrant communities only develop where citizens, businesses, service organizations and corporations together uphold a responsibility to proactively contribute of their time, talent and energy to help continuously improve the place in which we all live, work and play. We applaud all of those actively involved in such community improvement activities, and call upon the community for their support in this historic project that will be a key contributor to the long-term economic vitality of Chatham-Kent. No doubt this is the reason that the Municipality has included as a goal of the Chatham-Kent Strategic Plan to “ensure that the Capitol Theatre reaches completion.” And the Capitol is just one of the puzzle pieces for our bright future. We urge everyone, who is not already involved to get involved in the positive community building organisations that require your support, such as The Capitol Theatre, the new wellness and

recreation facility being planned for construction at St. Clair College, the new centre being built at Ridgetown College, the Children's Safety Village, the Blenheim Leisure Centre, East Side Pride, United Way, Physician Recruitment, Clear Creek Conservation Area, dresden.ca, WAMBO, Thamesville Threshing Festival, the YMCA, the Tilbury Fun Festival, the skateboard park, canvassing or walking for health related causes, service clubs, and many more positive community initiatives throughout Chatham-Kent. It is this active involvement of our citizens – each and every one of us – who, to quote from the Chatham-Kent Strategic Plan, will ensure that Chatham-Kent continues to be a “proud, progressive community committed to celebrating its diversity and ensuring a high quality of life for all its people”.

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“The Chatham Capitol Theatre Association” and “The Chatham Kent Festival” known as “The Chatham Capitol Theatre” are registered charity and not-for-profit organizations for the arts. For additional information on this announcement, or the Capitol Theatre project, please contact:

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Building a Theatre, Building your Community