

## Acting Governor Guadagno Visits Levoy Theatre For "Arts Mean Business" Tour

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### *Historic Cumberland County Theater Underscores the Value of the Arts in New Jersey*

**Trenton, NJ** – Highlighting the important role of the arts in New Jersey, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today visited Millville's Levoy Theatre, which receives funding awards from the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission. Annually, State arts funding employs an estimated 17,000 workers, supports 37,000 cultural events and attracts 5 million visitors, who spend another \$125 million.

"Support for the arts is support for our communities," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "The creativity and scope of New Jersey arts community not only improves the quality of life for all New Jerseyans, but also delivers real, local economic benefits – as seen right here in Millville."

On July 29, 2014, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts awarded more than \$15.7 million in grant funding for more than 700 arts organizations, projects and artists throughout the state. The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission, based in Bridgeton, received a grant worth more than \$116,000, which benefitted local organizations like the historic Levoy Theatre.

The Cumberland County Cultural and Historical Commission recommends and administers programs to increase the visibility and impact of the arts, local and county history and the cultural values, goals and traditions of the community. It serves as an advisory agency to the Board of Chosen Freeholders and aids in seeking available State, Federal and foundational funds to develop and support historical, arts and cultural programs. A significant part of the Commission's work each year is the development and administration of the various grant opportunities secured for in-county non-profit organizations.

"Cumberland County is known as a rural melting pot of ethnic and cultural diversity and has been identified as one of the only counties in New Jersey which has reached a minority majority status," said Matthew E. Pisarski, AICP, PP, Director of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission. "The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission works hard to ensure that all communities in the county share positive expressions of their heritage and art. It is through sharing our individual experiences that we realize and appreciate our common stories."

The original Levoy Theatre opened in January 1908 with a theater on the lower floor, a dance floor above and a 5¢ admission price. Throughout the 20th century, the theater saw many renovations and changes, including a conversion to a full movie theater in the 1930s and 40s when Warner Brothers took over the Levoy. The Levoy reached its height during World War II but closed in 1974. In 1998, the Levoy was added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

The Levoy reopened in 2012 with the Off Broad Street Players as its resident company. The Levoy also offers concerts, live theatre, comedy, movies and children's programming. More information can be found on the Levoy's website at: [www.levoy.net](http://www.levoy.net).

"The arts are an essential element of a thriving community, and the impact of the arts can be measured both economically and through the influence on this and future generations," said Phillip Van Embden, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Levoy Theatre Preservation Society, Inc. "The attraction of capital to the area and its ripple effect is most pronounced economically in the restaurants, bars, and hotels of the County and culturally through the

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impact on the children and families who discover a positive alternative to social challenges. Together with the Millville Arts District and Wheaton Arts, the Levoy has offered over 80,000 visitors an attractive destination and a fulfilling experience."

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts is a division of the New Jersey Department of State. Since 1966, its volunteer members and professional staff have worked to improve the quality of life in New Jersey by helping the arts to flourish. To learn more about the Council, please visit [www.artsCouncil.nj.gov](http://www.artsCouncil.nj.gov).

[View a list of FY15 grants by county.](#)

[View a list of FY15 grants by discipline/panel category.](#)

For more information about what's happening in the arts statewide, visit [www.jerseyarts.com](http://www.jerseyarts.com).

Acting Governor Guadagno was joined on her tour by, among others, Cumberland County Clerk Gloria Noto and Cumberland County Freeholders Joseph Derella and Thomas Sheppard.

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