

Arts groups primed to spend state grants on projects in '15

By Melinda Johnson
mjohnson@syracuse.com

Economic development in Central New York includes stronger arts and heritage organizations, according to grants announced this month through the Regional Economic Development Council.

Here's a look at how a few of the groups plan to spend the state grant money:

■ **The Onondaga Historical Association** received two \$80,000 grants toward construction of the Ska-nonh Great Law of Peace Center.

The OHA is developing a Haudenosaunee heritage center in the existing visitors' center at the Sainte Marie Among the Iroquois (familiar to many as the French fort) on Onondaga Lake Parkway. Renovation of the 100,000-square-foot interior will begin in May.

"This is a facility that gives validity to oral history, which is rare," said Gregg Tripoli, OHA executive director. To honor this oral history tradition, Tripoli said a major component of the center will be a film of the Haudenosaunee people sharing their stories.

He expects the exhibits and the building will be completed by November. OHA continues to raise funds and seek grants for the \$500,000 project. The state last year provided a \$50,000 grant.

■ **Syracuse Opera** received \$47,600 for its "Glory Denied" project, in a partnership with Clear Path for Veterans.

The contemporary opera by Tom Cipullo is based on the book "Glory Denied: The Saga of Jim Thompson, America's Longest-Held Prisoner of War," by Tom Philpott. The Viet Cong imprisoned Thompson from 1964 to 1973.

Douglas Kinney Frost, producing and artistic director, expects the contemporary opera will be performed in mid-November in Syracuse. It will be a production separate from Syracuse Opera's subscription season.

In the opera, the younger and older Thompson and his wife, Alyce, share their stories. The nine years of Thompson's captivity shattered the family.

"It's the struggle of con-



Philip P. Arnold, who developed content with Richard Hill for the new Ska-nonh Great Law of Peace Center expected to be completed in 2015 on Onondaga Lake Parkway. (Michelle Gabel/The Post-Standard)

necting to your family after you've been gone for a while," said Frost. "But then the larger issue for Col. Thompson was the fact that the country had moved so far away from Vietnam by the time he returned."

He described the opera as intense and compelling. "I like the piece," he said. "I like the punch of emotion the piece gets."

Frost said the four-person opera will be performed with seven musicians on a small stage. Before the performance, outreach events will be organized with Clear Path for Veterans.

The \$47,600 grant should cover the \$40,000 budget for the Syracuse performance. The remaining \$7,600 would underwrite a second regional show. Frost hopes to raise more money and tour the production across the state. He has approached veterans groups in other Upstate cities.

■ **Auburn Public Theater** received \$54,600 for its Cinema Innovation Project. Auburn Public Theater plans to increase movie screenings from three to 12 times weekly.

APT Executive Director

Carey Eidel said he needs to hire a full-time staffer to program the cinema project and part-time staff to screen the movies. With an expanded Auburn Public Cinema, Eidel said, first-run commercial and indie films would be screened. Ultimately, Eidel would like to organize a film club with a subscriber audience and with interviews with directors, via Skype.

The grant must be matched with local funds to support the project, which has a total projected cost of \$195,191.

■ **Everson Museum of Art** received \$30,000 to support its "Prendergast to Pollock" exhibition.

The museum will present the exhibit of paintings on loan from the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute in Utica Feb. 7 to May 10. The grant will be used for shipping, insuring, mounting, marketing and educational programs, said Sarah Massett, assistant director. The Everson continues to seek funds to cover the remaining costs of the \$100,000 project.

Contact Melinda Johnson anytime at 315-470-2146.