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

By Melinda Johnson

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 to cover 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.
- 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 connecting 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.
- Auburn Public Theater
- 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.