



LAWRENCE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Applicant Information:

Name of Organization Lawrence Busker Festival

Address 408 Indiana

City, State, Zip Code Lawrence, KS 66044

Telephone 785-749-2226 Fax 785-749-6782 E-Mail rrenner@vodvill.com

Project Information:

Project Director Richard Renner

Project Director's Title Producer

Project Title Lawrence Busker Festival

Start Date August, 24, 2012 End Date August 26, 2012

This project is most closely related to: Visual Arts Performing Arts Literature Media
 Other, please describe: _____

Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission Request \$ 2000.00 Total Project Expenses \$ 20800.00

Check should be made out to: Lawrence Busker Festival

EIN or SSN* 27-1953500

Authorizing Signatures: By my signature below, I certify that the information contained in this application packet is true, to the best of my knowledge.

Project Director's Signature Richard Renner Date 1/9/12

Printed Name Richard Renner Title Producer

Fiscal Agent's Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Title _____

*Please provide Employer Identification Number if an organization or Social Security Number if an individual. This will be required in the event of an award. If concerned about confidentiality, leave blank and then, immediately upon notification of an award, call Diane Stoddard at (785) 832-3413 to provide the information. Checks cannot be processed without the EIN or SSN.

Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission Grant

Lawrence Busker Festival 2012 Narrative

The Festival and its Impact

The Lawrence Busker Festival is gearing up for its Fifth year with a scheduled date of August 24-26, 2012. Since our first year we have grown in every area of our event – artist, production and marketing. We now have over 20 acts on 4 stages and advertising that reaches all over Kansas and Kansas City. The increased crowds best reflect the impact of the Busker Festival on the community. In our second year our estimated crowd size went from 8,000 to 15,000 people. Downtown Businesses reported an average 20% increase in revenues from the prior year. Informal polling done by the Journal World newspaper during the festival showed our audiences regarded this as strong part of the artistic culture in Lawrence. For the artists, the festival's impact is that Buskers are now requested and encouraged at other events throughout the year. For the community at large, Lawrence gets a first class well-run event that is free to attend and open to everyone.

Community Collaboration

The Lawrence Busker Festival was started with a simple idea that Lawrence, Kansas could be a popular spot for street performers. There were already many musicians and vendors using the sidewalks of downtown as their stages it seemed only natural to make it better. All that was needed was a focused and intentional effort to raise awareness in the residents of Lawrence and the community of performers about the opportunities here. Richard Renner, a local performer, recognized this. From what he saw at other street performer festivals, he knew it could work here.

A creative collaboration then began between Richard, Downtown Lawrence, Inc and the Lawrence Arts Center. Each partner added their expertise and time and the first Lawrence Busker Festival was created in 2008 on the streets of downtown Lawrence. Later, the Fiddling Championships joined in to provide musicians in exchange for variety performers at their event happening the same weekend. We also found support in the business community. People's Bank, Sunflower Outdoors, Sunflower Broadband, Us Bank, Hampton Inn, Chipolte and Brit's all provided support.

After it was all over, people asked that we do it again. So, in the following years, we did it again bigger. This time with more commitment from sponsors and the city we were able to increase the stages, provide more sound and lights and bring in more artists. The community supported us even more than before with increased attendance and sponsorship dollars. The City's Guest Tax gave us a big boost and a variety of local businesses – First Management, Treanor Architects, Peoples Bank - came forward to sponsor for the first time. On the production end the Lawrence Arts Center continued to provide services and storage for our event and the Lawrence Journal World printed our programs and gave us ads in their paper.

Last year was an incredible experience with record crowds and more stages and performers. The streets were packed with performers and patrons all enjoying the unique Lawrence culture. Our spotters counted car tags from Missouri, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado and

Oklahoma. Our marketing efforts in Topeka and Kansas City paid off and we received great press from the newspapers in those markets. I personally appeared on over 6 TV and Radio shows within the week prior to the festival.

The Lawrence Busker Festival is now the only street performing festival in the United States and the word has gotten out. I am getting requests from acts from all over the world and inquiries from tourism bureaus in other states.

Our Plans for this Year

Our growing concern is in attracting businesses that can make the Busker Festival a namesake and a part of their own image. We want to incorporate as many downtown locations and businesses as possible. To achieve this we plan to offer more "strolling" artists that work off the usual sites and near store fronts that invite them. Other entertainment services like balloon artists and face painters will be encourage to be there as well.

Our stages are also changing, we will concentrate on creating bigger areas with more experienced performers. Along with the 8th street, 10th street, Lawrence Arts Center and US Bank stage we will be looking into bringing a street stage near 7th and Massachusetts to create another area for performers. Our artist roster will drop from 30 to around 20 but they will be better acts that have more street experience. We also plan on bringing in 5 outside performers this year, an increase from the 4 from last year.

Matching Funds

Since this is a free to attend event, our matching funds will come from an anticipated mix of businesses, foundations and governmental sources. We have currently requested funding from the city's Guest Tax and continue to find sponsors in the local business community to provide both cash and in kind services. We are now a non-profit organization and will be soliciting direct donations as well.

We have a vision of making the Lawrence Busker Festival a regional draw for the audiences and an international draw for artists. Increased exposure of our audiences to street acts and increased awareness of our city's support in the performer community is our main goal. With a maximum allowable grant from the Lawrence Arts Commission we can continue towards this goal and make the festival a greater part of an already great city.

Lawrence Busker Festival 2011 Schedule of Events

June 2012 to August 2012

Promotion and marketing on radio, TV, Internet and print outlets

Thursday, August 23rd, 2012

8-10pm

Busker Ball – a ticketed event to attend a private performance of the best buskers at the festival. Food and drinks served.

Friday, August 24th, 2012

5-10:30 pm

4-5 sites in downtown Lawrence featuring street performers

Individual Street acts performing

Street vendors selling services and products

Saturday, August 25th, 2012

10-12pm

Classes taught to children at the Lawrence Arts Center

Noon to 6pm

Family Stage at the Lawrence Library featuring puppeteers, storytellers and musicians

3pm – 11pm

4 sites in downtown Lawrence featuring street performers

Individual Street acts performing

Street vendors selling services and products

Sunday, August 26th, 2012

Noon – 4pm

Performance continue downtown with an additional stage in South Park in conjunction with the Fiddling Picking Championship.



**LAWRENCE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT BUDGET FORM**

Budget Categories	LCAC Grant Request	Requestor's Contribution	3 rd -Party Cash Match	3 rd -Party In-Kind Match	Total
1. Personnel	1,000.00	500.00	3,800.00	700.00	6,000.00
2. Fees and Services	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
3. Rental Fees	0.00	100.00	400.00	600.00	1,100.00
4. Travel	0.00	1,200.00	0.00	800.00	2,000.00
5. Marketing	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00	5,000.00
6. Operating Expenses	0.00	500.00	0.00	300.00	800.00
7. Capital Expenditures	0.00	0.00	500.00	400.00	900.00
Total Project Expenses	2,000.00	5,300.00	7,700.00	5,800.00	20,800.00

Note: As you write your budget justification, be sure to address the amount of your matching support, its source(s), and how the match reflects community interest. Your budget should correspond with the plan laid-out in your project narrative.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

1. Personnel

pay for 4 stage managers

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors

2. Fees and Services

Artistic fees for performers

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors and a grant from the City of Lawrence Guest Tax fund.

3. Rental Fees

Lighting and Sound for 3 stages

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors

4. Travel

Airfare for out of town performers, in-kind donation of hotel rooms for three nights

5. Marketing

Marketing for print, radio and internet in Lawrence, Kansas City and Topeka

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors

6. Operating Expenses

Postage and basic office expenses

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors

7. Capital Expenditures

Storage Rental and miscellaneous production purchases

3rd Party cash and in-kind match comes from anticipated business sponsors

Key Personnel and Artists information

Staff

Richard Renner – Owner of Vodvill Entertainment Company

408 Indiana, Lawrence, KS 66044

Richard has been performing since 1981, after graduating from the University of Kansas with a theater degree. Leading artists have trained him in his field – Marcel Marceau, Avner the Eccentric, Sigfrido Aguilar. He has performed in 3 countries and all 50 states for both private and public sponsors. For the last 25 years he has successfully sustained a career and provided opportunities to other artists through his own booking agency - The Vodvill Entertainment Company.

Bill Wachspress – Variety Performer and Festival Organizer

1205 Pennsylvania, Lawrence KS 66044

Veteran Assistant Tournament Director of the International Jugglers Association, Bill founded its New York City affiliate, New York Jugglers, and as President, ran annual juggling and unicycle festivals in Central Park. He co-founded the University of Kansas Juggling Club and, as a member of the Kansas City Freeloaders juggling club, assisted in running annual juggling festivals in Kansas City. As a life-long entertainer, Bill has performed on stage and film, and at festivals and events of all sorts adding up to nearly 2000 performances. Juggling, magic, and balloon art are just a few of his quirky diverse skills. Bill is a nationally ranked boomerang thrower. He has entertained on the streets of New York, and the greater Kansas City area since 1981.

Ric Averill – Drama teacher and playwright

2 Winona Avenue, Lawrence KS 66046

Ric Averill has been the Artistic Director of the Seem-To-Be Players professional children's theatre company since he and his wife, Jeanne, founded the company in 1973. Ric writes plays and music, with degrees in both Music Composition and Children's Theatre. Ric has received numerous Playwriting Fellowships and been selected for five professional play development symposiums including the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices, the Indianapolis Bonderman Youth Theatre Playwriting Symposium and the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival.

Brady Karlin –

Brady owned and operated Karlin Family Farms for 4 years and created public events there with music and entertainers to help draw people to the farm and introduce them to their produce. This unorthodox ability and production skills makes him perfect as a stage manager for the Busker Festival.

Performing Artists

This is only a brief selection of over 20 acts we have planned

Thom Sellectomy – sword swallower

Thom Sellectomy is actually Geoffrey Cobb who has been trained extensively through the Ringling Brothers Circus School in the 80's. It was there he learned sword swallowing from one of the older school teachers. This isn't exactly a clown skit but Geoff has found a way to express the absurd comedy of putting things down your throat and asking people to watch. His skills at this are equaled by his story telling ability and his natural ability to please anyone willing to watch.

Voler - Thieves of Flight

Aerial artistry has come of age and is presented by this group with grace and daring. Suspended by fabric above the sidewalk in front of the Lawrence Arts Center, they move to music and create a scene that is both breathtaking and beautiful. Images of suspension and soaring, struggle and success, are artfully created in the shows on Saturday.

Jonathan Burns - Contortionist

Jonathan Burns always thought he was "special"...

At age 12 a magic shop opened near his hometown of Johnstown, PA. He would show up every week and come home with new tricks. He would then try out his new "powers" on his family, friends, and basically anyone who would watch. Eventually, someone took notice and asked him to perform at their daughter's birthday party. He bought a sparkly vest, threw all of his tricks in a suitcase, shoved some silk scarves up his sleeves, and wowed those kids for about 20 minutes (it was a pretty long scarf)! Maybe it was the \$20 he made or the sparkly vest, but this is when he decided showbiz was for him.

In 2000 he began college at Millersville University, where his act began to break away from traditional magician's tricks, and he began to experiment with other skills including juggling, stand-up comedy, contortionism, and sideshow stunts.

After school he decided to begin his career as a full-time performer. Since then his talents have taken him to stages across the United States and to festivals in Canada, China, and New Zealand. He spends most of the year touring Colleges & Universities, and his summers are spent performing at festivals and events around the globe.

Jason Phoenix - Live Electronics

J Phoenix brings his unique sounds and style to a unique venue - the street. He performs on electronic instruments, synthesizers and mixers in a spontaneous rush of sound, emotions and rhythm. All live, in person and on the street. Not hidden away behind a wall of speakers but out front just for you - and your soul.



March 20, 2012

Richard Renner
Lawrence Busker Festival
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Richard;

The Board of Directors of Downtown Lawrence, Inc. is excited to know you are moving forward with plans for the fifth annual Lawrence Busker Festival. This festival is exactly the creative "signature"-type of event we like to see in Downtown Lawrence. We have been very pleased with the growth and improvements you've made over the years.

Last year's festival was the best one yet. Downtown sidewalks were teeming with people and every visitor had a smile on his or her face. Our merchants couldn't get over the incredible attendance. Many said it business was through the roof that weekend, and I heard absolutely no complaints.

Once again, DLI will be happily on board to assist with permit fees, insurance and marketing as well as anything else we can do to ensure another successful event. We would like to keep the Busker Fest thriving for many years to come.

All the best,

Cathy Hamilton
Director



Hayley Cherveney, of Kansas City, Mo., performs an aerial artistic display with the Thieves of Flight during last year's Lawrence Busker Festival at the Lawrence Arts Center, 940 N.H. The Busker Festival is set to run through the upcoming weekend.

Performers to take to downtown streets this weekend

Dancing, juggling and other skills to be on display during 2nd annual event

John Henry

Don't be alarmed when you come across fire-eating, sword-swallowing and phonebook-ripping folks this weekend in downtown Lawrence.

Feel free to tip them instead.

Dozens of street performers will take to the sidewalks and stage Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the central business district for the Lawrence Busker Festival, a second annual showing of scheduled improvisational entertainment.

The fest will feature area and traveling buskers — a.k.a. street performers — with acts intended to entertain, educate and, yes, generate a little revenue to get back home.

"They rely on tips to make the weekend worthwhile," said Ric Averill, who's helping Richard Renner organize the fest and will serve as emcee for busker performance near Ninth and Massachusetts streets. "That's what they live on. That's their fee. They just rely on the kindness of strangers."

More than 20 groups and individuals are scheduled to participate, while others who

show up unannounced will be welcome to join in the aerial dancing, juggling, puppetry, music, magic, mime and other skills on display.

Scheduled performances start at 6 p.m. Friday on the "US Bank Stage," at the southeast corner of Ninth and Massachusetts. Several other downtown sites will accommodate performers, including the "Lawrence Public Library Family Stage" and the front of the Lawrence Arts Center.

Spectators shouldn't feel pressured into offering tips, Averill said. Just show up, suspend your disbelief and enjoy the odd, interesting and always-entertaining displays of creativity.

"It's going to be awesome," Averill said. "It's the wildest, craziest things ever."

The arts center also will offer free, 30-minute workshops for children interested in music, storytelling, juggling and mime. Workshops are set for 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Saturday, but space is limited. For more information or to register, call 843-2787.



Performers bring their acts outdoors this weekend in Lawrence's first Busker Festival

ROBERT TRUSSELL, The Kansas City Star

Jugglers, fire-eaters, chalk artists, living statues, clowns, mimes and musicians will descend on Lawrence for that city's first festival dedicated to street performers. On Saturday and Sunday the Lawrence **Busker Festival** will offer performances on public stages in the downtown area between Seventh and 10th streets along Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Richard Renner, the festival's producer and promoter (although he prefers the title of "unindicted co-conspirator"), said he hoped the festival would become an annual event.

"I've certainly done my share of street performing, and I've seen street performers at festivals all over the world,"

Renner said by telephone from the Kentucky State Fair, where, naturally, he was performing. His act incorporates juggling, clowning, a unicycle and assorted other entertainments. "I knew downtown Lawrence had the capability to support a festival."

The festival has a budget of about \$5,500 and enjoys the sponsorship of various Lawrence businesses and financial institutions. It received some support from the Kansas Arts Council, and the Lawrence Arts Center functioned as the festival's umbrella financial organization. Renner

said he hoped to incorporate the festival as its own nonprofit entity.

All performances are free, but Renner said the **buskers** will ask for tips.

"The street performers will be asking for money," Renner said. "We're paying artists a stipend, and we're feeding them so no one's going to lose money by coming to this festival. But if they make money, that's entirely up to them. That's the way street performing is. It's a matter of survival. And it makes better shows, if you ask me."

Renner said that although artists have been selected and performance schedules finalized, the festival is open to all **buskers**.

"Any act can show up and just do their thing," he said. "We're not excluding anybody."

For more information, including a map of performance sites, go to www.lawrencebuskerfest.com.

Lawrence Busker Festival

Busker Festival a hot ticket (and it's free)

Fire eater Rod Sipe entertains the masses gathered at the corner of Ninth and Massachusetts streets during opening night of the Lawrence Busker Festival on Friday. In addition to the flames, visitors were treated to magic tricks and music on the streets of downtown. More than 20 performers from all over the country will be performing throughout the weekend.

Photo by Nick Krug



Matt Smith, Tonganoxie, holds up his 2-year-old son, McClellan, to watch an act during opening night of the Lawrence Busker Festival. This is the second year for the street performance extravaganza. "It's new and I think it's taken off here in Lawrence, and I think this event is just going to get better every year," said Richard Holmgren, who puts on the "Flying Debris show."

Photo by Nick Krug



Valerie Wolf steadies a paper flower from her mouth as her husband, Robert, snaps a bullwhip to knock it out. The Wolfs perform as The Wicked Liars.



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