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2 Lafayette arts groups will combine to reduce costs, gain efficiencies

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The Performing Arts Society of Acadiana and the Acadiana Center, both in Lafayette, for the Arts plan to merge to reduce costs. / Gannett Louisiana

Written by KRIS WARTELE The Daily Advertiser

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LAFAYETTE, La. -- Two nonprofit Lafayette arts and entertainment powerhouses will soon become one.

The Performing Arts Society of Acadiana and the Acadiana Center for the Arts will merge. An announcement is expected in June.

A merger has been in the works for some time, according to AcA board member, Ed Abell, who also served as board president

for three years.

"It's all moving along smoothly," Abell said. "Part of it is a matter of efficiency, and it will eliminate some duplication of some things, including reducing costs and give us a more efficient tool for fundraising."

Money is one reason for the merger.

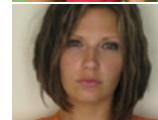
"We can eliminate duplicates and do some joint fundraising," Abell said.

For the fiscal year that ended June 30, the AcA reported \$1.2 million in net assets, according an independent audit published on the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's website.

PASA, for the tax period ending June 2011, reported income of \$822,088 and \$164,712 in assets, according to its latest 501(c)(3)



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Vicki L. Chrisman, director of PASA, initially declined to comment about the merger but later explained her hesitancy after a board of directors meeting Wednesday night..

“Prior to going into a board meeting, I was not in the position to be able to comment,” she said. “We had some final business that we needed to take care of.”

Chrisman called the merger process “exciting.”

PASA rose from the ashes of The Fine Arts Organization after the FAO went bankrupt. PASA was chartered Feb. 3, 1989. The AcA has its roots in the Acadiana Arts Council, which was chartered Jan. 17, 1975.

Both regional groups are respected cultural arts organizations that attract national artists and performers. Their artistic missions often overlap.

Abell, who called the two “a natural fit,” said the merger will be beneficial financially and professionally for the groups.

He said the programming at the agencies is similar and the plan would increase the efficiency of both organizations.

Abell, a Lafayette attorney, helped to set up the current leadership at the AcA as well as the construction of its new building on Vermilion Street in downtown Lafayette.

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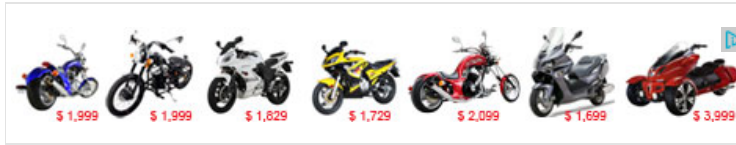
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