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## **Now open! Campus Theatre enthralls locals at opening**

MILLEDGEVILLE — As the green ribbon was cut during Campus Theatre's grand opening ceremony Tuesday, many fascinated Georgia College & State University students, teachers, administrators and local residents attended to finally satisfy their curious minds.

Anne Rohr traveled from Atlanta to showcase her juggling skills outside the theater's entrance while comedy duo Laurel and Hardy impersonators greeted anticipators as they entered the movie palace. Visitors also received raffle tickets at the door allowing them a chance to win one of three prizes — a Jittery Joe's basket including a t-shirt, mug and coffee, Georgia College & State University memorabilia basket and a movie theater basket with popcorn, candy and soda.

While guests toured throughout Box Office Books, Jittery Joe's Coffee, the Black Box Theatre screening a silent film of Laurel and Hardy and the Georgia College Theatre Department, they kept their taste buds satisfied with popcorn, candy and soda provided during the VIP reception.

"This is just the frosting on the cake for downtown to help bring people in and help our businesses. If ladies want to go shopping, then their husbands can stop at the bookstore," Milledgeville Mainstreet Director Belinda Washlesky said.

The 10,492 square foot Box Office Books, replacing Pawprints Bookstore on Wilkinson Street, carries numerous selections of fiction, non-fiction, magazines and Georgia College apparel and accessories. The lower level serves as a second campus bookstore offering textbooks and supplies. The textbook area is a portion of the project that is the driving force behind the project, Project Manager Mark Bowen said during a media tour early Tuesday afternoon.

"I think the city of Milledgeville has been anticipating this. It's just

another media to keep the local interest alive,” said Kimberly Bolden, bookstore employee. “It’s very important in the community and this bookstore is going to vie for change. It’s appealing for any age group.”

Black Box Theatre has modular theater seating with state-of-the-art lighting, sound and projection system. Theatre Department Chair Karen Berman said seating can be modified for different theater applications including theater in the round and can serve as rental space for weddings, receptions and events.

“This is a beautiful, flexible use of space,” Berman said. “Steel Magnolias will be our first performance here in the fall.”

A spacious make-up lab and dressing room will be used for productions, and students will learn how to create props like prosthetics and fake blood. A portion of the design lab contains the original brick wall that served as the former balcony. Berman said students will be able to take advantage of the design lab to use CAD 3-D for set and costume design once the department moves into their eight offices in June.

“This space will provide actors with everything they need to put on shows,” Berman said.

The nerve center of the theater is the control center, which features electronic equipment like a High Definition projector, CD and DVD players, seven wireless computer packs, digital mixing board, internal pickups and moving lights.

Like most theaters in the south during the 1930s, the Campus Theatre was segregated and fragments of that legacy remain visible today. The new acting lab served as the “colored” entry to the theater, a separate space with a separate entry and concession area, giving access to a part of the balcony.

“We hope this blending of old and new creates memories for the new generation,” Georgia College President Dorothy Leland said of the restored art deco theater.

For the grand opening, the Theatre Department was decorated with scenarios from past shows, including a RENT exhibit showcasing the work of theater students. Berman said the exhibits are a way to give visitors a sense of the possibilities that the department can offer.

“If we don’t revitalize downtown then the city would suffer. To bring people back to downtown, we certainly would be able to do that with the renovation of this theater,” Mayor Richard Bentley said. “We can look at the brightness of the marquee as a symbol of the brighter days ahead of us.”

Box Office Books is open at 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

For more information about the bookstore and its offerings, call (478) 445-8398 or visit [www.gcsu.bkstr.com](http://www.gcsu.bkstr.com).