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Hind Foundation Awards \$750,000 Grant to SLO REP; A Giant Step Toward the New Downtown Theatre

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Hind Foundation has awarded San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP) a \$750,000 grant to provide lighting, sound and technical equipment for the new theatre to be built in downtown San Luis Obispo.

SLO REP Managing Artistic Director Kevin Harris announced the grant on behalf of the Hind Foundation at Thursday's Good Morning SLO, the Chamber of Commerce's monthly breakfast.

"At moments of such remarkable generosity, it seems insufficient to say, 'We are profoundly grateful,'" Harris said. "But truly, we are profoundly grateful to the Hind Foundation. This is an enormous statement of trust and confidence in our project, and it puts us a giant step closer to having the money needed for our planned groundbreaking early next year."

The grant will be used to purchase and install state-of-the-art technical equipment, including all aspects of lighting and sound, including lighting boards, circuit walls, microphones, speakers and control boards.

"The Hind Foundation grant caps an extraordinarily generous period of contributions to SLO REP," Harris said. "Over the last 14 months, SLO REP has raised more than \$3.5 million in cash and pledges bringing SLO REP's total fundraising to well over \$20 million."

Harris added: "We are very close to the full amount we think we need for construction, but one significant, unknown variable is the impact of the federal government's tariff policies. We won't know the full impact for several months. Nonetheless, we are confident that we will have the funds needed to break ground as soon as the parking garage is completed early next year."

Harris said SLO REP's fundraising committees are continuing to pursue major gifts to ensure groundbreaking and a smooth transition into the new theatre.

He called attention to one of SLO REP's most popular fundraising incentives so far, the "Name a Seat" campaign. For \$5,000, a donor can name a seat in the 215-seat main stage theatre.

More than 150 seats have been named so far, with many donors naming two seats so that their \$10,000 contribution can qualify their names to be recognized permanently on the donor wall that will grace the theatre's lobby. (For more information, please visit www.slorep.org and click on the Capital Campaign tab.)

In its application for the grant, SLO REP described its long-range vision to establish SLO REP as a renowned destination for live performances, attracting local residents and visitors alike.

SLO REP and SLO City officials have collaborated for more than a decade on the City's long-held vision to establish a bona fide cultural arts district with a new venue for live performances as a key anchor.

Through a variety of live programming – plays, comedy nights and late-night cabaret-style entertainment – SLO REP expects to draw 50,000 patrons annually, enriching the region's cultural vitality while also providing a significant economic boost.

SLO REP's new venue will be built on Monterey Street adjacent to the parking structure now under construction at the corners of Monterey, Nipomo and Palm streets. Groundbreaking is planned for early 2026, as soon as the parking structure is completed, with a grand opening in 2027.

The new venue will include two theaters: A 215-seat main stage for musicals, comedies and dramas, and a 100-seat black box theatre with flexible seating to showcase new works, staged readings and late-night cabaret entertainment.

The project is a joint venture between SLO REP and the City of San Luis Obispo, which has pledged \$6.7 million in hard construction costs. SLO REP's total project includes the 2023 purchase of a separate building at 3533 Empleo St. for its Academy of Creative Theatre (ACT) as well as rehearsal space, set construction and costume storage.

ABOUT THE HIND FOUNDATION

The San Luis Obispo-based Hind Foundation was founded in 2006, committed to funding community-based projects and programs throughout the Central Coast that encourage people to work together to build an enduring legacy for future generations. The Foundation focuses its efforts on music and visual arts, land and nature conservation, plant and wildlife protection, ecosystem conservation and historical landmark restoration. For more information, visit HindFoundation.org.

ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO REPERTORY THEATRE

Established in 1947 as SLO Little Theatre, San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP) is one of the country's oldest regional theatres and is SLO County's only nonprofit, professional theatre company. In addition to offering productions year-round, SLO REP also operates the Academy of Creative Theatre, which provides education and training opportunities to young artists ages 3-18 through a variety of camps, classrooms and performance opportunities. SLO REP is dedicated to connecting people through powerful storytelling in ways that open the mind, nourish the soul and illuminate our shared humanity.