

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 2009**  
**EVENT DATE: AUGUST 13-16, 2009**  
**Dan Emmett Music & Arts Festival**

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For Detailed Up-to-Date Festival Information, Visit [www.DanEmmettFestival.org](http://www.DanEmmettFestival.org)

## **Woodward Opera House Open for Tours**

MOUNT VERNON - The Woodward Development Corporation will be hosting tours through the Woodward Opera House, America's oldest authentic 19th century theater, during the 2009 Dan Emmett Music & Arts Festival, held August 13th through the 16th.

Guides will be available to explain the progress of the project to date and explain the mission and objectives of the organizations promoting the restoration project.

Situated at the corner of South Main and Vine Street in the heart of downtown Mount Vernon, the Woodward Opera House (built in 1850-51) occupies the third and fourth floor of the Italianate style historic commercial building. Mount Vernon's own Dan Emmett was one of the many performers who graced the theater stage during its time.

The project to restore the Woodward to its 1880s configuration and re-open it as a 21st century performing arts venue began in 1998 and has been divided into 8 phases. Phase 1, 2 and now 3 are complete, as the exterior renovation was finished in 2007. The Woodward exterior now has its original look back. This year the conversion of all occupied spaces to geothermal heating and cooling continues with development of a water well and replacing natural gas with geothermal units in two more locations. This initiative lowers operating costs and the capital cost of the project. It also reduces the Woodward's carbon footprint and will aid our effort to become LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. Phase 4 will begin as soon as the balance of funds are raised to move forward with that portion of the project. Approximately \$2 million towards the \$6.6 million needed for Phase 4 has been raised.

Come see the results of the recent work. Visit during the Festival and you will (1) learn what the team has learned about the 1884 layout of the theater, lobby and entranceways; (2) see the preliminary plans for restoring the Theater to its 19th century appearance and for enabling its use with twenty-first century requirements and amenities; (3) see plans for renovation of the rest of the Woodward and Annex buildings for them to become a leading cultural and performing arts venue in central Ohio; (4) experience the completed restoration of three downtown Woodward

building store interiors, and our 80 seat blackbox theater, ThePlace@TheWoodward; and (5) get a complete explanation of the recent completion of the exterior restoration work.

The Woodward Opera House will be open to the public two days during the Festival: Saturday - August 15<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 7:00 p.m. , and Sunday - August 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you have questions concerning the Woodward, you can visit the historic site during the Festival. For additional information on the Woodward, call 740-392-6142 or visit their web site at [www.TheWoodward.org](http://www.TheWoodward.org).

This year, ThePlace@TheWoodward, 111 South Main St., will be host to many events and activities during the Festival. The popular Chautauqua program featuring John Brown and Clement Vallandigham is on the scheduled for Thursday. Friday evening will bring Jeff Putnam to the stage as Buddy Holly. Saturday afternoon will feature various dance and musical performances. Famous Veggie Tales characters Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber will appear each day at ThePlace@TheWoodward, and will close the event on Sunday with three Veggie Tales movies.

Highlights of this year's Festival will include performances by Sonny Geraci of The Outsiders, Phil Dirt & The Dozers, a wide variety of local musicians such as Kokosing River Surf Club, Autumn Daze, Mount Vernon Heritage Singers, KnoxSquares, Knox Idol, as well as a new motorcycle show and the annual antique and classic car show, all with a wide variety of delicious foods for your tasting pleasure.

The 2009 Dan Emmett Music & Arts Festival runs August 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> in Downtown Mount Vernon with various activities each day. The 2009 Festival is made possible through the contributions of Ariel, First-Knox National Bank, Time Warner Cable, WMVO, Eagle 93, WNZR, I-Conn Video Productions, Mount Vernon News, the Knox Partnership for Arts & Culture, and the Knox County Convention & Visitors Bureau. For additional information, contact the Festival at (740) 392-FEST (3378) or email at [director@DanEmmettFestival.org](mailto:director@DanEmmettFestival.org).

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