

Renovated Bowl in the Pines Amphitheater looks to draw national acts to Sidney

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By Greg Levinsky

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SIDNEY — After undergoing over \$1 million in renovations, Snow Pond Center for the Arts officials hope to attract national musical acts to the Bowl in the Pines Amphitheater.

Snow Pond Center for the Arts officials say they hope to attract artists on the same caliber of those who play at Thompson’s Point in Portland and Darling’s Waterfront Pavilion in Bangor. Snow Pond Center for the Arts is less than 10 miles from both Augusta and Waterville.

“What we have done for over 85 years is music and arts education,” Christa Johnson, director of development at the Snow Pond Center for the Arts, said in a phone interview. “What we want to do is work with artists that care about generating the next generation of artists, so it’s a mutually beneficial mission.”



The three-year, three-phase renovation is scheduled to be finished by June.

The final phase includes installing power and rigging over the stage, finishing ADA restrooms, two concession areas and a new permeable paver patio in front of the bowl. Highlights of the first phases include structure work, road construction, engineering, surveying, a traffic and architecture study, and more.

Built in 1930, the renovation expands seating capacity from 2,000 to 3,500-4,000 over the first few years. Capacity is expected to eventually reach 7,500. With a larger seating capacity, each concert will generate approximately \$300,000 for the local economy, officials said.

“Concerts at the Bowl will not only provide great musical events right here in central Maine, the events will also generate revenue for the area’s businesses such as restaurants and lodging,” Snow Pond Center for the Arts Executive Director John Wiggin said in a statement. “Snow Pond’s Bowl project was a perfect fit for the Avangrid Foundation and Central Maine Power, as their mission supports using the arts to anchor a thriving community. We are also incredibly grateful to every foundation, business, our alumni and the community-at-large for supporting this important project, which will positively impact this entire region.”

Snow Pond officials hope artists already doing a tour of the East Coast would make a stop in central Maine. Snow Pond Center for the Arts wants to expand the arts offerings in the region.

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“We want to add to the plethora of artists that are performing in Maine, not compete with,” Johnson said. “The more cultural opportunities we can have in central Maine, the more we can promote the arts for everyone.”

There will be 20 total concerts from June through September, including 12 free and public shows put on by students of New England Music Camp. Around eight shows are slated to be ticketed, larger scale events. All CDC health safety standards related to the coronavirus will be followed, which means the 2021 season may not be a full one.

“In all fairness, let’s be safe,” Johnson said. “We certainly look forward to having concerts this summer, but if we can’t do that, we’re looking forward to concerts next summer.”



The Bowl in the Pines Amphitheater is seen during a previous season at Snow Pond Center for the Arts in Sidney. *Photo submitted by Snow Pond Center for the Arts*

Snow Pond Center for the Arts announced earlier this week a \$25,000 gift from the Avangrid Foundation and Central Maine Power that put the fundraiser over its \$1 million goal. The Avangrid Foundation is funding lighting. The project includes overhead house lights and wall-mounted lights on the stage, both of which are crucial for bigtime shows. The gift also covers power for the concession stand, food truck vendors, and audience and ambient lighting.

“We know that building sustainable communities means investing in those places where creative identity shines through,” said

Nicole Licata Grant, director of the Avangrid Foundation, said in a statement. “Our commitment to help unique cultural venues like Snow Pond operate more efficiently ensure that generations of Mainers can experience even more world-class art and culture in their own backyards.”

Home to the New England Music Camp in the summer and [Maine Arts Academy](#) during the school year, Snow Pond Center for the Arts encompasses 200 acres on the eastern shore of Messalonskee Lake.

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Enhancing the amphitheater feeds into the organization’s mission.

“Anybody that comes, we want them to be a part of the entire experience here at Snow Pond,” Johnson said. “The more we can incorporate kids that come here and kids in the entire community, the more exposure they’re going to have to the arts.”

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