

# Minnesota Association of Community Theatres (MACT)

## ACCESS PLAN

### **Accessibility Statement adopted June 19, 1999:**

The Minnesota Association of Community Theatres (MACT) is dedicated to providing access to its programs and services to all. Information about MACT's accommodations is available through the MACT office.

### **Access Plan Update adopted July 29, 2006:**

MACT's Access Committee recommends this Access Plan to address (1) the Current Status of accessibility of our statewide programs and (2) Goals to implement our organization's objective of being accessible to persons of all disabilities. The Access Committee will meet at least annually to revisit the Access Plan and recommend revisions for adoption by the MACT Board.

### **COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY:**

Current Status: All communications with board members, individual or organization members, non-members and the general public are to be accessible. Most communications currently involve traditional print media as well as e-mail and website access. Upon request, MACT will make communications accessible in alternative formats such as text-only email, large print, Braille, audiotape or read from person-to-person. Our website ([www.mact.net](http://www.mact.net)) is to be as fully accessible as possible. Since we had a blind board member from 1996 to 2005, we typically made all newsletters, meeting agendas and minutes, brochures, etc. accessible via email, which he could access via his computer's voice synthesizing software. We will read late-arriving agenda additions aloud so everyone knows what is being discussed.

### **EVENTS ACCESSIBILITY:**

Current Status: Planning for play festivals, theatre conferences or other workshops will include a list of desired features, including ADA accessibility standards. For many years, our Festival Host applications have included statements such as: "Do the areas that would be used by the casts, crews and audiences meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility standards? . . . Are the following areas wheelchair-accessible? Auditorium, Lobby, Stage, Backstage, Dressing Rooms, Light booth. . . ." We assure that spaces for workshops, silent auctions, receptions, etc. are accessible. Likewise, in seeking convention hotel accommodations, we investigate how many accessible and non-smoking rooms are available, as well as the accessibility of all public areas to be used by our festival or conference participants.

Since 1995, we have chosen to make available for all festival performances Audio Description (AD) for persons who are blind or of low vision, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. This generally means that ALL shows will be interpreted so that theatre performers have a "level playing field" and are performing with interpreters out front just as companies use the same stage, lighting & sound systems. Since the demise of Arts Across Minnesota Festival grants, which enabled us to be proactive, we have made access services available upon request, with a publicized deadline of one or two weeks before the event to request ASL or AD. We have made use of VSA Minnesota to publicize statewide and to fund a portion of our festival access costs.

Understanding that many facilities used by Minnesota community theatres are in historic buildings and difficult to make perfectly accessible, we will nevertheless aim for the highest

standard of accessibility. In cases where stairs or other potential barriers are involved, we will work with local hosts and venue owners to make acceptable accommodations for patrons needing assistance.

#### **MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY:**

Current Status: Since MACT's bimonthly board meetings take place at different locations, our policy in arranging for meeting spaces is to be sure that all rooms and bathrooms are to be physically accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If a site is less than fully accessible, the board and venue owner will make accommodations to assure that all people can enter and exit safely.

#### **FACILITIES ACCESSIBILITY:**

Current Status: MACT does not own or rent any facilities. Our policy is to be sure that all facilities used for MACT activities (meeting sites, theatres, workshop venues) are to be physically accessible to persons with mobility impairments. This includes bathrooms and other public areas. If a site is less than fully accessible, the board and venue owner will make accommodations to assure that all people can enter and exit safely. If several facilities are used at events (theatre + hotel + workshop space + restaurants), our goal is to assure that they are close together or that transportation between sites is easily available.

#### **OTHER PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY:**

Current Status: We include accessibility considerations as part of our planning process for meetings or events. Will there be handouts? We will get copies in advance to email to people upon request or to put on CD, Braille or tape, depending on their need. If movement is involved in a workshop, we will make presenters aware of the need to accommodate participants who cannot see or move as well as others.

#### **UPDATING ACCESSIBILITY PLAN:**

Goal: We will reconvene our Access Committee regularly and will include members of the disability community as participants. The committee will go over an ADA compliance checklist that may help us prepare for future MACT events and programs. We will discuss, for future evolution of our Access Plans, issues such as planning for accessible routes for emergency/evacuation situations, smoke-free meeting areas, fragrance-free events (admittedly difficult in theatres with freshly-painted sets), telephone conferencing, future workshops or resources on accessibility guidelines, etc.

Goal: In upgrading our website, we will use approved web accessibility guidelines; sections that are not accessible will be made accessible; photos/graphics will be described visually in tags. MACT's Access Plan will be included as a resource on the website.

Goal: We will use accessibility graphics in advance publicity to make people aware of accommodations that can be provided upon request. Deadlines will be indicated.

Goal: We will publicize role model and best practices efforts of various theatres and arts organizations to assist fellow theatres in likewise becoming more accessible.

Goal: We will work with the MACT\*Fest host facility to assure that all MACT Festivals will be fully accessible and to promote attendance by people in the region who may not have regular access to Audio Description or ASL interpreting.

Goal: We will publicize meetings and preliminary agendas in advance (at least two weeks) via our website, email, mail, Hotline and other means so that all members and other interested persons may have adequate notice and may be able to arrange accessible transportation or communication accommodations.

Goal: MACT's annual budget will include a line item for covering anticipated accessibility costs (ASL interpreters, captioning, Braille, etc.).

Goal: Since MACT no longer has a regular office, we recommend revising our Accessibility Statement as follows: The Minnesota Association of Community Theatres is dedicated to making its programs and services accessible to all. As a statewide service organization, MACT believes we should "demonstrate by doing" to show member organizations how reasonable accessibility accommodations can assure that all members of our communities can participate in our arts venues, performances, auditions, discussions, communications, and other programs.

**ACCESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Current Members: Jon Skaalen, Julianna Skluzacek, Darren Beecher (MACT president)

Past Members: included Lee Perish (Deaf, active theatre-goer); Mary Catherine (ASL interpreter); Juliette Silvers (blind theatre-goer, performer at 2006 FAST\*Fest and 2001 MACT\*Fest); Sam Jasmine (blind performer at 2006 FAST\*Fest, runs "Disabled & Proud" show on KFAI-FM); Britta Beeck, accessible website designer; Eric Peterson; Kathy Ray; Tim Ray.