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## UA makes case for donation for performance venue

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FAYETTEVILLE — Opening an additional performing arts venue at the University of Arkansas could bring as much as \$1.9 million in additional revenue to Fayetteville from out-of-towners each year.

So say researchers from the UA's Center for Business and Economic Research. They provided some important numbers for UA Chancellor G. David Gearhart to use Monday when he asked the Fayetteville Advertising & Promotion Commission for \$1 million toward the venue's \$17 million cost. Gearhart said some donors have already loosely committed \$10 million toward the project.

Plans are to retrofit the UA's historic Field House into a state-of-the-art, 700-seat venue suitable for musical and theatrical performances. UA officials hope to be in the hall by 2015.

"We're going to make this happen as quickly as we can," the chancellor said during his presentation to the A&P. "We'd like to announce a lead gift in the early fall. We do believe it will have an impact on the city, bring more people to Fayetteville and bring more money to Fayetteville."

The chancellor proposed that the commission, which collects and distributes taxes on hotel/motel/restaurant receipts, could spread it's \$1 million gift over three years.

The commission was missing two members at its meeting Monday, another has resigned and a fourth was new. So no action was taken on the university's request.

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Each year, various UA vocal and musical groups put on some 175 to 200 performances and recitals, some at the university's 60-plus-year-old Stella Boyle Smith concert hall and some at the increasingly busy Walton Arts Center. The Waltons have decided to build a new performance arts facility in Bentonville, leaving the UA and city of Fayetteville to make due with the existing arts center.

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What's lacking is a place for large ensembles to perform, said Rhonda Mains, chairman of the UA's music department. She estimated that there would be 40 such events with hundreds of students, their parents and families who'd come to watch.

"A building of this type will attract more people to this area," Gearhart said. "We think this will have a dramatic impact on the community and the city."

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