

Townsmen
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Chair of the School District 5 School Replacement Committee Chris Johns, Mayor Wayne Stetski and Key City Theatre board chair Sandra Cave sign a proclamation stating the three parties will keep the Key City Theatre in the new Mount Baker Neighbourhood Learning Centre when it is built.

Theatre key to new school

Proclamation declares that theatre space will be part of new "neighbourhood of learning"

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Theatre goers of Cranbrook and area needn't worry anymore. There will be a theatre in the Key City for many years to come.

School District 5, the City of Cranbrook

and the Key City Theatre signed a proclamation on December 20 at City Hall that puts just that in writing. When the new Mount Baker Neighbourhood Learning Centre is constructed, it will have a theatre space.

"The School Board,

Key City Theatre Society and the City of Cranbrook are all in agreement," Mayor Wayne Stetski told the Townsman. "It's a very good partnership."

The proclamation puts to rest rumours that have been swirling as the call for a new

high school building has become even louder over the past few years. The Key City Theatre, attached to the school on the North side of the building and used hundreds of times a year by students in the district, would be difficult to

maintain if the Mount Baker is torn down to make way for a new building. But now, all three involved parties have officially said they will make room for theatre space in the new Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

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Proclamation guarantees theatre

will be part of new school

"What this does it put all those rumours to rest," Stetski said. "(It) makes sure that a new theatre will be part of a new school."

Trustee Chris Johns,

who is the chair of the School Replacement Committee, said in his research to lobby for the new high school, he noticed many Neighbourhood Learning

Centres have had theatre space in them. Keeping the Key City Theatre intrinsically linked to Mount Baker is a feather in the cap as they try to get a new building underway.

"The majority of

them had some sort of theatre attached to it," Johns said. "We saw the establishment of a new Key City Theatre as an important lynchpin in our efforts."

The theatre is well used by students in the

district, from the many Mount Baker theatre productions, to elementary school Christmas concerts to middle school band performances.

"It goes without saying, but I'll say it: it's a

key part of all performing arts activities in our school communities," Johns said, adding that the theatre goes way beyond what happens in the schools. "We would be sadly missing an opportunity if we didn't have this theatre in our community. It's bigger than its attachment to Mount Baker."

Stetski said the city has always been involved with the Key City Theatre. Currently they contribute \$65,000 to the theatre's operating costs and are even proposing to raise that contribution to \$70,000 for 2013.

"We're happy to do that because the theatre is such an important part of our community," Stetski said.

The theatre is used by many different community groups and captures a wide array of audiences.

"The productions that they have brought in have been excellent," Stetski said.

But the mayor says what he enjoys the most about the theatres are the locally produced, homegrown productions from school concerts to elaborate plays.

"It's really an important part of what Cranbrook is," he said. "I love the professionals that come in, but I also really love the local productions."

Trustee Trina Ayling previously sat on the Key City Theatre's board of directors. She will be stepping down and Johns will take her position as the School Board's representative.

Stetski said the new high school is something all Cranbrook residents are looking forward to - when it finally happens.

"The replacement of the high school is one of the priorities we all have for Cranbrook," the mayor said. "It's not a matter of if, but when."

Johns said the work continues behind the scenes to get funding approved for the new Neighbourhood Learning Centre. They continue to be in contact with MLA Bill Bennett and the province and hope to someday have a big, exciting announcement to make.

"We're going to have a new Mount Baker opening in September - we're just not sure what year that will be."