

Fargo Theatre Management Corporation

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026



A Century of Stories

On March 15, 2026, the Fargo Theatre celebrated its centennial. This remarkable milestone was made possible by generations of generous and passionate Fargoans. Countless patrons, volunteers, members, staff, donors, and artists added their own unique threads to create a brilliant tapestry of arts and community. As we gathered to salute a century of stories, the Theatre team continued to work hard behind the scenes to shape the next 100 years.

Centennial Celebrations

Fargo Theatre leadership went above and beyond to deliver a season of celebration for the entire community. Committees of staff, board, and volunteers developed numerous opportunities to mark the Theatre's 100th birthday. A special centennial logo was created along with a special line of centennial-themed merchandise. The Centennial Film Series was developed to offer a title from a different decade of the Theatre's story each month throughout the year. The CFS kicked off with a bang in April: a 30th anniversary screening of the Coen Brothers' FARGO with special guest Peter Stormare. The acclaimed actor delighted the large audience as he recounted stories from the set of FARGO and his career.

On the weekend of the Theatre's centennial, two events were held to celebrate. The "Roaring 20s Soiree" at the Synclaire Event Center included a popular photo booth, silent auction, cocktails, and many entertaining games. Guests enthusiastically embraced the theme and came dressed in resplendent 1920s attire. The "Centennial Celebration" was held at the Fargo Theatre on March 15. This multidisciplinary event included live music, dance, speakers, and a special award presentation. The production closed with the premiere of FARGO THEATRE: THE FIRST 100 YEARS. This humorous and heartfelt documentary was commissioned by the Theatre and directed by award-winning filmmaker Mike Scholtz. It captures the Theatre's legacy through stories of the people who shepherded it through a century of evolution.



Film Programming

The Fargo Theatre’s slate of film programming for Fiscal Year 25-26 was diverse, acclaimed, and successful. The biggest hits of the fiscal year were family-friendly titles: THE SHEEP DETECTIVES and WICKED: FOR GOOD. The latter was celebrated with an opening-night fan event that included musical theatre karaoke, a “good witch bubble” photo station, and special giveaways. A partnership with Netflix’s theatrical distribution wing proved successful. FRANKENSTEIN, WAKE UP DEAD MAN, and PEAKY BLINDERS all finished in the Fargo Theatre’s top 15 new releases.



Curated film series and screenings continued their popular run throughout the fiscal year. Total attendance for the Classic Film Series (2,242) and Kids’ Flicks (2,215) increased from the previous year. WHITE CHRISTMAS, A MINECRAFT MOVIE, and THE LION KING attracted the largest audiences for those two series. A 3-film Family Adventure Series was produced in summer 2025 and drew a total audience of 193. A holiday-themed movie series (including the ever-popular interactive ELF screening) delivered a total audience of 595. But ultimately, Frank would reign supreme once again. As THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW celebrated its 50th anniversary, its status as the ultimate cult film was made clear. The Theatre’s annual screening of ROCKY HORROR was yet again its single largest screening of the year with 717 patrons singing and dancing along.

Events and Highlights



In the last year, the Fargo Theatre hosted:

- **33** professional/touring acts
- **26** educational and entertaining field trip experiences
- **20** corporate events
- **49** birthday parties/small private events
- **17** local arts events including productions by the FM Ballet and FM Symphony Orchestra
- **14** community/nonprofit events for organizations including Spread Your Sunshine and VA
- **21** specialty film events including Silent Movie Night, the FM LGBT Film Festival, and the Northern Plains Indigenous Film Festival
- **315** days of new release film programming and...

The Blenders' final (Christmastime) bow. After 24 years of touring each December, the band announced that 2025 would be the final run of their Holiday Soul Tour. The Fargo Theatre has been so grateful to host this beloved tradition. The Blenders are not breaking up, so hopefully we will be able to welcome them back at some point in the future for a new production.

Audience Engagement and Development Activities



This year, the Fargo Theatre continued to offer existing programs, like special sensory-friendly Kids Flicks screenings that feature lower volume, brighter lights, and an intimate, inclusive environment. These screenings make moviegoing more accessible to audience members on the autism spectrum or living with other sensory sensitivities.

The annual Cat Video Fest, put on in partnership with Homeward Animal Shelter, returned this September. The event serves as an animal adoption event, and fundraiser for both organizations.



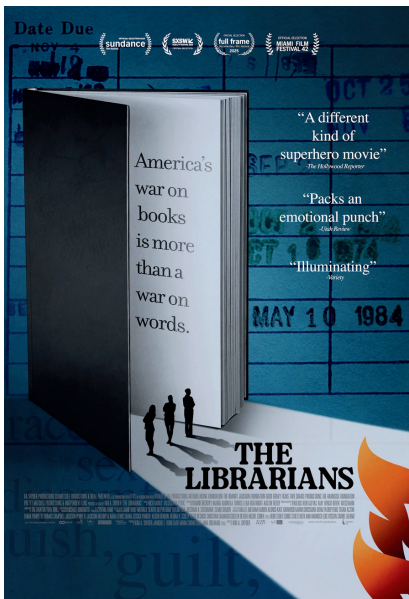
The Fargo Theatre Film Club continued to meet once a month as a group to discuss new-release films. The staff-run club is free and popcorn and open to any movie fan that wants to participate.

New ideas for community-engaged screenings included offering free admission to A CHRISTMAS STORY with a gently used coat or jacket donation. Donations went to Churches United, a nonprofit shelter and food pantry that serves the local unhoused population. Our relationship with Churches United continues to grow, and we hope to continue to working with them in the years to come.

Social media audience development included the special centennial “100 Days to 100 Years” campaign. Starting in December, we counted down the days to our centennial with Fargo Theatre fun facts, historical information, testimonials, restoration project updates, and more. The campaign generated over 800,000 organic views across platforms and resulted in a surge of community engagement.



2026 Fargo Film Festival



The celebratory spirit of the Centennial Celebration on March 15 continued into the start of the 26th annual Fargo Film Festival, which kicked off on March 17. The 2026 Festival screened a total of 99 independent films, and hosted 48 visiting filmmakers. Audiences enjoyed post-screening Q&As, luncheon panel discussions, parties, guest lectures, filmmaker socials, and the annual 2-Minute Movie Contest.



A new film category, Northern Plains Voices, was added to the Festival this year to create a dedicated space for films made by current or former residents of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or Indigenous Nations sharing that geography. Multiple screenings of Northern Plains Voices films welcomed visiting filmmakers, and were well-attended with regional film supporters. The added category was overall a success, and will remain for the upcoming 2027 Festival.



Evening showcase events included a screening of *THE LIBRARIANS* with Academy Award-nominated Director Kim A. Snyder, and a sold-out worldwide premiere of *PRESCHOOL* with writer/director Josh Duhamel, who received this year's Ted M. Larson Award.

The festival concluded with the Best in Fest Showcase: a collection of films including Category Winners and Honorable Mention Winners across multiple festival categories.



FILM FESTIVAL

MARCH
17-21 **2026**

Centennial Capital Campaign

Fundraising

In Fiscal Year 24-25, the Theatre launched a \$5.5 million capital campaign to fund facility improvements, production infrastructure upgrades, and programming expansions. The Xcel Energy Foundation, Visit-Fargo Moorhead, and the ND Commerce Department made the first contributions to the campaign. In FY 25-26, the Offutt Family Foundation, NoDak Insurance, and Gate City Bank joined dozens of individuals and businesses in supporting the campaign. Theatre staff also raised funds by conducting a sale of the historic auditorium’s seats. Theatre lovers were eager to add a piece of the venue’s history to their personal collections. A total of 140 seats were sold, raising \$14,000. As of writing this report, approximately \$1.8 million in total has been secured for the campaign.

Centennial Projects

While there are many worthwhile projects necessary to keep the Fargo Theatre in tip-top condition, audiences prioritized one request loud and clear: new seats. After years of dreaming and planning, that longtime goal was realized. In January and February 2026, a large-scale facility refresh project was completed. It included fresh paint on everything, new carpet and flooring in the lobby and historic auditorium, the addition of wheelchair pads, an improved tech booth, and yes, those new seats. These projects brought the Theatre’s art deco grandeur back into Technicolor while improving patron comfort and accessibility. Preparing for a bright new chapter was the perfect way to kick off the centennial year.

