



Executive Director of Catamount Arts in St. Johnsbury, Jody Fried (left), and his counterpart from the Colonial Theatre in Bethlehem, Stephen Dignazio (right), exchange a handshake in the Main Gallery of the Catamount Community Arts Center.

PRESS RELEASE

April 20, 2010

NORTH COUNTRY ART HOUSES UNITE

CATAMOUNT FILM & ARTS and the COLONIAL THEATRE announce collaboration.

Northern Vermont and New Hampshire's leading arts and culture organizations will encourage North Country residents to attend on-going film screenings, live programming and events at both art houses. Effective immediately, members of both non-profits will enjoy shared benefits and exciting new programming.

The Friends of the Colonial was formed in the winter of 2000 in order to save the oldest continuously operating movie theatre in the country, the Colonial Theatre in Bethlehem, NH. Each year since then, The Friends has improved the facility and broadened The Colonial's programming. To date, The Colonial has presented 8 seasons of fine films, national touring artists, children's and community events to a growing audience of residents, visitors and students.

"The Colonial Theatre's mission to preserve and enhance film and performance, to contribute to the economy, and to inspire the community through support of the arts is compatible with the philosophy of Catamount," said Stephen Dignazio, the Executive Director of the Colonial. "We both firmly believe that arts and culture will play a pivotal role in the future development of the region."

Catamount, a long-time mainstay of the arts community in the Northeast Kingdom, has been active as a movie theater and fine arts presenter since 1975. In October 2008, Catamount opened its new community arts center in the Masonic Temple in St. Johnsbury, VT. This new facility features two movie theaters, allowing Catamount Arts to present a regular schedule of acclaimed foreign-language and independent films; two state-of-the-art classrooms, which are used for art, computer and music education; an 80-seat performance space dedicated to regular performances by local artists; and a gallery showcasing local and area artists' work. Catamount brings diverse arts programming and education to a region of Vermont where low incomes and sparse populations might otherwise hinder access to world-class art. Catamount brings art into schools, provides venues for local performing and visual artists to showcase their work, and enhances the region's economy by attracting visitors.

Jody Fried, Executive Director of Catamount, recently commented on the news:

"As more high quality programming is offered in the area, more people will attend events on both sides of the river. Promoting participation in the arts is good for both organizations and will act as a catalyst for the local economy. A rising tide lifts all boats."