

Organization History

History

The Depot Arts Center is operated by the Anacortes Arts Foundation, which started out as the Anacortes Arts & Crafts Festival.

About the Anacortes Arts Foundation

The Anacortes Arts & Crafts Festival was founded in 1961. During the past 26 years the Festival has grown into one of the state's leading local arts organizations, serving thousands of people. The Foundation's permanent collection, gathered via purchase awards selected from the juried show each year, has been hailed as one of the best small collections in the state. It was the growth of this collection that promoted organization of the Anacortes Art Gallery in 1969.

The success of occasional performing arts events organized by various Festival committees attested to community interest and support of such events and led to the formation of the Anacortes Community theatre in 1964 and, in 1974, of Pop'N'Arts' performing arts series which, with the Anacortes School Districts' Cultural Education Program, received a Governor's 1975 Arts Award for innovative joint programming.

Purpose of the Anacortes Arts Foundation

The growing diversity of local arts programs and activities resulted in the establishment of the Anacortes Arts Foundation in 1977 as an outgrowth of the Festival to oversee the expanding scope of the arts activities in Anacortes. The aim of the Foundation is to serve as a coordinating organization for all local non-profit arts groups. In addition, the Foundation disburses the proceeds raised annually by the Anacortes Patrons of the Arts (APTOA) and maintains a central office as a local arts clearing house.

In 1981 the Foundation, with the cooperation of Burlington Northern and the City of Anacortes, acquired the old Great Northern Railway Station as a permanent home. In the past several years the Foundation's principal emphasis and expenditure of monies has been on development and renovation of the Depot as a community cultural center and central office for the arts groups in the community.

Under the umbrella of the Anacortes Arts Foundation

- Vela Luka Croatian Dance Ensemble
- Fidalgo Youth Symphony
- Anacortes Farmers Market

- Schola Antiquae Vocis - Gregorian Chant & Reinassance Polyphony Music Group