



## CITY OF KENNER PRESS RELEASE

**MICHAEL S. YENNI**  
MAYOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### DIRECTORS OF RIVERTOWN THEATERS FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS GET PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FROM GAMBIT; ALSO PLAY KEY ROLE IN CONTINUED REVITALIZATION OF RIVERTOWN

**Kenner, LA.** - Kelly Fouchi and Gary Rucker, the artistic and managing directors of the Rivertown Theaters for the Performing Arts, will be named "Entertainers of the Year" as part of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Big Easy Theater Awards in March.

The awards are an impressive exclamation point to the incredible transformation at the theaters in Rivertown since the duo turned in a winning proposal in April 2012 to take over management of the former Rivertown Repertory Theater.

"As artistic and managing directors of the new Rivertown Theaters for the Performing Arts, the duo has produced 16 shows this past year, an ambitious set of productions that's kept the theater busy nearly every weekend," gushed *Gambit*, which closely covers the theater scene in New Orleans and sponsors the yearly Big Easy Theater Awards.

The incredible quality of the shows at the theater has sent season ticket sales surging and resulted in 17 total Big Easy nominations for actors and crew members, including *Spamalot* as best musical, *Noises Off* as best comedy and best director nominations to Rucker and David Hoover.

"It was a huge honor for us," Fouchi said of the awards for her and Rucker and the nominations for the theater. "We definitely are grateful the community has come out and supported us and that (*Gambit*) recognized all the hard work and the high bar we set for ourselves."

Rucker agreed: "This is what we love to do, and it's not like we're only doing this for the awards or recognition. But when you work really hard and someone wants to recognize that work, it's definitely wonderful."

Fouchi and Rucker signed a four-year contract with a four-year renewal two years ago that did not include the subsidies given to the previous managing group, a fact that makes their immediate impact in Rivertown all the more impressive, said Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni.

"Kelly and Gary put together a fantastic proposal in 2012 to take over the theater and came in with unbelievable energy and big ideas," Yenni said. "Audiences immediately noticed the difference and so too

have the merchants throughout Rivertown. With the return of Children's Theatre we are seeing school field trips again and younger audiences at the productions."

Fouchi estimated that the two theaters were responsible for about 30,000 people coming into Rivertown in the past year. Many who attend the productions were not familiar with the quaint setting, ample parking and other businesses.

"We are still trying to raise awareness that this beautiful theater with high quality products exists in Kenner's Rivertown. We find that once people attend a show, they turn into a repeat audience member."

The resurgence of the Rivertown theaters comes at the same time other additions and improvements are bringing more people into what once was an under-performing museum district, Yenni said.

That includes a new satellite office for the state Office of Motor Vehicles, an additional location for the parish Registrar of Voters, the recent home of the popular Oktoberfest and steady progress toward reaching Main Street status.

At Ristorante Da Piero, a Rivertown staple for 11 years, owner Evelyn Cenni said the theater has had a positive impact in the past two years.

"I have noticed a big difference," she said. "This whole area is vibrant with the theater. People who didn't know we were here, now they know. People who come to the theater notice that Rivertown has many other things."

For more information on the Rivertown Theaters for the Performing Arts visit [www.rivertowntheaters.com](http://www.rivertowntheaters.com).

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