

A Brief History of the Lumberyard Arts Center

On a September evening in 2002 at the last Art Walk of the season, the dream of turning a local downtown landmark into an art center began to form. One building stood dark and closed amidst the busy background of the evening. Baldwin Lumber, owned for many years by the Tom and Mary Swan family, had recently ceased operations, leaving vacant the 1914 Ives-Hartley building. After being in continuous operation for nearly 90 years, Baldwin Lumber Company had closed its doors.

- The Board of the Community Arts Council was approached with the proposal that they pursue obtaining the building and turning it into an Arts Center.
- Spring 2003 - Officers of the Arts Council made a presentation to the Board of the then owner of the building, Baldwin State Bank, and received a favorable reception.
- June 18, 2003 - A community meeting was held to gauge public interest in the project.
- August 12, 2003 - The Lumberyard Arts Center Project was awarded 501(c) (3) designation under the umbrella of the National Heritage Foundation.
- Fall 2006 - The LAC received their own 501(c)(3) status independent of the National Heritage Foundation. The first meeting of the voting members and the Board of Directors of the now independent organization was held on October 6, 2006.²
- Funds came from many sources including a community talent show which raised the first \$700.00.
- A substantial donation of \$100,000.00 at the beginning of the project from a generous supporter of the arts, Mary Swan, allowed the work to begin.
- Contributions came from the Brownies with money they earned selling cookies and a 7 yr. old "artist" contributing 50% of her sales at summer Art Walks.
- The Baldwin Community Arts Council (now a part of the Lumberyard Arts Center) was one of the first organizations to contribute substantial funds to the project with their donation of \$5,000 in 2003.
- The Baldwin City Community Theatre has regularly donated a portion of their receipts from performances and events.
- Grants have been obtained from the Douglas County Community Foundation, the Rice Foundation and others; donations have been received from private citizens, businesses

and corporations and have provided the funds needed to proceed with renovation allowing Phase 1 to be completed.

- Phase I includes the front half of the building. With the completion of that phase, the community now has an attractive working facility which includes offices, two classrooms, an art gallery, a catering kitchen and a beautiful courtyard area suitable for community events as well as a rental facility. A long term goal is the completion of Phase II, which will allow us to enhance our ability to “create-play-innovate.”
- March 2010 - public programming began with a gallery exhibit featuring Rosemary Murphy.
- Summer 2017 - The LAC hires first part-time Coordinator, Wendy Conover.
- January 2020 - The LAC first full time Director, Jeannette Blackmar
- February 2024 – The Board of Directors kicks off “Long Live the Lumberyard”, a five year vision.