



January 19, 2011

Senator Joe Thomas:

I write to convey the Downtown Association of Fairbanks' support for Dance Theatre Fairbanks' request for capital funds to improve the energy efficiency of their facility.

Dance Theatre Fairbanks is a very welcome addition to downtown, a genuine perfect fit. They expertly refurbished and re-purposed a municipal building. With their massive course schedule, they draw people downtown in droves. Now – by applying for a capital grant for an energy retrofit – they are bringing into focus a problem afflicting many, many downtown buildings: high operating costs.

This problem is not unique to downtown. Buildings all over our community are inefficient, built in a different era. Their boilers are inefficient, or the insulation is far below what it should be, or mechanical and electrical systems and appliances use more energy than they should. The buildings of which I speak are in the commercial and non-profit sectors. And it is fair to say that many of them have not reached the end of their useful structural life and will continue to be occupied.

A program was initiated in 2007 and remains in effect to increase residential energy efficiency. This is a laudable policy, and the program's effectiveness is being evaluated. It is not too soon to begin an effort to finance the capital costs for the commercial and non-profit sectors to become more energy efficient.

For a non-profit like Dance Theatre Fairbanks, lowered operating costs will help this non-profit train our children to dance and love life. For downtown, energy efficiency can keep our buildings occupied and free-up revenue. For Fairbanks, we will keep our dollars in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David" followed by a large, stylized closing flourish that resembles a right-facing curly bracket.

David van den Berg

cc: Interior delegation