



June 3, 2020

Texas Commission on the Arts
PO Box 13406
Austin, Texas 78711

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and our 800 business members, it is with much honor that I write this letter of strong support for The Grand 1894 Opera House's grant request.

Very simply, The Grand is the Heart of our community and beyond... It is truly a special, one of a kind, place and is one of the few remaining theatres of its era in Texas and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Its precious value to our region is, well, PRICELESS! I say that, because the Grand is so much more than the impressive economic impact it delivers. It's a place we call home...

It was never clearer on how important The Grand is to this community than after the devastation our city suffered from Hurricane IKE in 2008. The Grand's impressive determination and ability to recover quickly and open its doors to its family brought much needed comfort, laughter, and hope that everything was going to be just fine.

The approximately 90,000 attendees annually continue to be a critical component to the success of our downtown businesses for over 40 years. The fact is that The Grand has become the area's leading center for the performing arts as well as a primary economic driver for business development and tourism throughout the Island. In addition, their continued success helped Galveston Island earn the downtown cultural Arts District designation from TCA in which we are all so grateful.

It important to know that The Grand is also reaching out to our regional schools and providing children's performances, in-school workshops, two theatre residencies for students, a children's arts festival and a juried fine arts festival. Exposure to the Arts and The Grand's commitment to our children has made a huge impact in our schools and in the lives of our children.

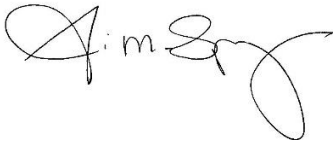
Executive Director, Maureen Patton and her incredible team also give back to our community. Their countless volunteer hours and commitment to excellence in all that they do have elevated other

business organizations and non-profits throughout our community. Their energy, passion, and commitment to the community are unwavering. Maureen's leadership and respect in this community is second to none earning her just about every honor that can be bestowed on a community leader...Galvestonian of The Year; The Spirit of Galveston Award, The Christie Mitchell Award, and the list goes on and on and on.

The Grand draws 70% - 80% of its 90,000 annual visitors from "off-the-island" making ongoing operations of The Grand critical to the strength, success and growth of the Cultural Arts District and the region. The Grand is historical and is in great need of major work, so that her lights will never go dark... The Grand, true to her name, is indeed the "Grandest of them all!"

This grant request is so important to The Grand, and we sincerely hope that their exceptional artistic quality, rich history, exemplary community service/support, critical educational outreach, and powerful economic impact will be helpful in your decision making process.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina M. Spagnola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Gina M. Spagnola
President & CEO