**MEDIA ADVISORY**

Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., Superintendent

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Curtains Up!**

*Ribbon cutting Nov. 22 gives exclusive peek at new backstage area of beloved Mercedes Edwards Theatre*

Clovis Unified will be introducing the new Backstage Scene Shop attached to the Mercedes Edwards Theatre at a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony this Friday, Nov. 22 at 10:30 a.m.

The new 7,000 square-foot space directly connected behind the stage will provide a full experience for student thespians as they will no longer have to run outside to nearby classrooms to do costume changes between scenes, or lug heavy sets across campus to load onto the performance stage. The theater serves as home to the musical theater programs of all five of Clovis Unified's comprehensive high schools and occasional community groups.

  "We are thrilled to have the Mercedes Edwards Theatre receive this needed upgrade, and we are grateful to our community for their support,” said Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator Geoffrey Dean. “This change will bring our drama productions and all of the shows at the MET to a whole, new level!"

It’s the first major improvement at the beloved community theater (built in 1942) in over 20 years and was made possible in part with voter- approved bond dollars. In addition to all Clovis Unified high schools performing musical productions at the MET, community events, student concerts, special speakers and conferences are also held in the classic theater.

The newly constructed space includes: a 2,000sf scene shop/workspace, two dressing rooms, costume storage, a makeup room, a mezzanine, restrooms and more.

At the Ribbon Cutting, theater students will demonstrate staging, walking scenes and reading lines; and lead interactive tours showcasing backstage areas and technical features of the new space.

**WHAT:                 Mercedes Edwards Theatre Backstage Scene Shop Ribbon Cutting**

**WHERE:**              Mercedes Edwards Theatre, 902 Fifth St., Clovis

                                On the Clark Intermediate School campus

**WHEN:**                10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 22

**VISUALS:**           Superintendent Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., and Governing Board President Hugh Awtrey will give a few remarks before student actors workshop on the stage and lead tours of the new spaces behind the stage that will have interactive experiences waiting.

**ABOUT THE MET:**

* Built in 1942 as part of the then Clovis High School campus
* Named in 1982 to honor Mercedes Edwards, who was Clovis High’s choir director for 28 years
* Renovated in 2000 with new lobby, seating, box office, lighting, sound and rigging
* In its 80 year history, there have been more than 200 musical productions performed at the MET.

**REMAINING 2024-25 CLOVIS UNIFIED MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS AT THE MET:**

* *“Jekyll & Hyde,”* by Clovis North High, concluding run 7:30 p.m. Nov. 22 and 23; 2 p.m. matinee Nov. 23
* *“The Wizard of Oz,”* by Buchanan High, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 16-18 and 23-25; 2 p.m. matinee Jan. 18, 25
* *“Footloose,”* by Clovis West, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 27, 28, March 1, 6-8; 2 p.m. matinee March 1, 8
* *“Anastasia,”* by Clovis High, 7:30 p.m. April 24-26, May 1-3; 2 p.m. matinee April 26, May 3

 **CONTACT:**

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Geoffrey Dean, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator

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