



**News Release**  
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**CAT Theatre to Continue Operations in Henrico Home**

Jointly released by CAT Theatre and the Northern Henrico Civic Association  
For Immediate Release

The Boards of Directors of CAT Theatre and the Northern Henrico Civic Association are pleased to announce that CAT Theatre will be continuing its current theater series in its longstanding home on N. Wilkinson Rd, as originally planned.

“Leases have been negotiated and will soon be signed,” reported Dr. Delta Bowers, President of the Board of the NHCA, “ensuring CAT’s occupancy throughout its previously announced 2018-19 season, ending with its fifth production in June 2019.”

“We have every expectation that this will be a long term fix to our short term challenges,” added Kelly St. Clair, President of the Board of CAT Theatre. “Plans call for CAT’s productions to continue in place for many years to come.”

*Boeing, Boeing*, the first production in CAT Theatre’s 2018-19 five-show season, opens tonight in its traditional home.

Announcements were issued within the last month suggesting that CAT Theatre would end its 54-year history as one of Central Virginia’s oldest continuing theater operations, due to the inability of the landlord and tenant to come to terms on a rental agreement for CAT’s historic performance facilities, which are owned by NHCA. Subsequent announcements indicated that CAT may choose to continue operations but transfer their productions to other performance facilities, perhaps at the city-owned Pine Camp.

“When we announced the sad news of CAT’s closing, we were immediately overwhelmed by a strong show of community support for our operations,” explained St. Clair. “We are particularly grateful for the generous assistance offered by the Richmond Dept. of Rec and Parks, managers of Pine Camp, and HATTheatre in western Henrico.”

“The assistance that ultimately helped us reconcile and move forward came from Virginia Repertory Theatre,” stated Dr. Bowers. “Virginia Rep’s staff leadership met privately with both Boards and helped us find a way to move forward together.”

“Once all sides fully understood the challenges at hand, strategic solutions that positively addressed the needs of all parties were quickly identified,” assured Phil Whiteway, Managing Director of Virginia Rep. “Virginia Rep will be signing a lease with NHCA that meets their reasonable financial requirements. We also will be signing a sublease with CAT Theatre at a monthly rent that is within its current means.”

“To finance the funding gap between the two leases,” explained Nathaniel Shaw, Artistic Director, “Virginia Rep will be offering spring break and/or summer camp experiences at the NHCA facility that will provide valuable recreation and enrichment opportunities for the children and families of northern Henrico’s neighborhoods.”

In addition, Whiteway and Bruce Miller, Founding Producer of Virginia Rep, will provide a theater management consultancy with the CAT Theatre board over the coming months to help board members develop short and long term financial strategies designed to ensure CAT’s sustainability.

“Greater Richmond benefits the most when all of its live theaters thrive,” asserted Jeff Gallagher, Chairman of the Board of Virginia Rep. “Nurturing an extensive, strong and diverse theater community has been a cornerstone of our Mission since 1975. We didn’t want to see CAT’s operations end when solutions to relatively minor short term challenges seemed within reach.”

“CAT Theater has long functioned as a ‘farm team’ for every other theater in town,” continued Pat Walker, Immediate Past President of the CAT board. “Countless actors, directors, and designers have launched their careers at CAT and then moved successfully to larger theaters throughout the metro area. CAT is an important part of RVA’s arts ecology.”

“Virginia Rep is NOT taking over CAT Theatre,” stressed Gallagher. “We were concerned to read the early news reports. Our staff leadership has decades of experience running theater operations in Richmond and beyond. They were able to offer a creative solution to help our friends at CAT stay the course and return to sustainability. Through these transition arrangements, everyone—especially RVA’s audiences, theater artists, and the northern Henrico neighborhoods—will emerge in the winner’s circle.”

Virginia Repertory Theatre was formed by the merger of Barksdale Theatre and Theatre IV in 2012. For eleven years prior to the merger, Barksdale and Theatre IV worked in strategic collaboration. Since 2001, the company now known as Virginia Rep has offered significant assistance to other nonprofit theaters during their times of need.

When TheatreVirginia ceased operations in 2002, Barksdale/Theatre IV offered fulltime employment to six longtime TVA staff members, assumed the responsibilities associated with TVA's seasonal contract with Actors Equity Association, purchased TVA's costume collection, and offered free subscription tickets to all TVA subscribers.

CAT Theatre has been the resident theater company of the NHCA facility on Wilkinson Rd. since 1964. For more information about *Boeing, Boeing* and the rest of CAT Theatre's upcoming season, visit the CAT website at [www.cattheatre.com](http://www.cattheatre.com).

For more information about Virginia Rep's spring break and summer camp opportunities, contact Irene Kuykendall, Education Manager, at [ikuykendall@virginiarep.org](mailto:ikuykendall@virginiarep.org).