

8-6-09

Branson Chamber Chatter

Circus Star Now At Yakov's

Andre Soumatin first came to the United States in 1990 with the Moscow Circus from what was then the communist regime in the Soviet Union. They played large arenas in Las Vegas and other cities. The Soviet Union was dissolved in Dec. 1991.

Now, Soumatin, and his wife, Marina, star in Yakov's Moscow Circus at the Yakov Smirnoff Theatre through Sept. 7. Many people remember the couple as the adagio dancers on the Showboat Branson Belle.

In Yakov's Moscow Circus, the circus and animal acts perform within a story line in which Andre, who plays a clown, and Marina, a ballerina, are in love but have been cruelly separated. It has a happy ending, he says. For information, visit www.yakov.com.

Movie Shoot Boosts Economy

Producers of the independent feature film "Winter's Bone" say they'll be sure the movie shot on location around Forsyth for the past several months will be shown locally once it's completed. The screenplay was adapted from the 2006 novel by Missouri author Daniel Woodrell about an Ozarks teen struggling to keep her family together.

Producers estimate they spent about \$700,000 of their \$2 million budget locally, said Lynn Berry, Director of Public Relations for the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and the Convention & Visitors Bureau. The Missouri Film Commission worked with the producers. They shot scenes mostly in Taney and Christian counties and some locations in Springfield. About 15 area residents had speaking roles with about 20 people as extras. Director Debra Granik won a 2004 directing award at the Sundance Film Festival. Playing the lead role is Jennifer Lawrence, 18, of Louisville, Ky., who has had a recurring role on "The Bill Engvall Show."

Eat To Help

From 5 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 11, Panera Bread at 2407 Green Mountain Dr. will host a fund-raiser for The Table Rock Freedom Center. Tell the cashier you're there to support the Center, and Panera Bread will donate 10 percent of your purchase amount to benefit the center that supports women who are recovering from addiction, abuse or mental health issues.

It is a yearlong residential program for women 18 and older, headquartered in Branson West. For more information, call the Center at 417-239-0012 or visit www.trfreedom.com.

Don't Miss Free Business Expo

More than 40 area businesses will participate in the Branson Business Expo 2009 presented by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 20, at the Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center.

From 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., OTC's Center for Workforce Development presents a workshop on effective business practices. It's all free and open to the public.

This year's partners and sponsors include the Springfield Business Journal, OTC, Cyberstreet, Best Buy, Skaggs Regional Medical Center, Harrison Daily Times, Digital Lunchbox, Rock 'N Roll is Here to Stay, NuVox, Limited Editions for Her, William Woods University, Creative Printing, PC Net, Fidelity Logic and Family Pharmacy. For more information, call Ladona Johnson at 334-4084, ex. 314, or visit www.bransonchamber.com.

Sidewalk Project Starts Soon

Beginning Aug. 16, the Missouri Department of Transportation will begin installing 393 sidewalk ramps at street and driveway entrances along Missouri 76 from Roark Valley Rd. to Gretna Rd. This will make the sidewalks easily accessible for people using wheelchairs, carts and strollers, and they'll do it with minimal interference with traffic, said spokesman Bob Edwards.

One lane will be blocked for a short distance where crews are working with traffic shifted to the center turn lane. Work will be done from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Sunday through Thursday. Work begins at Roark on the north side, then coming back on the south side from Gretna.

The project fulfills requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The low bid of \$680,000 is being paid with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It's scheduled for completion by November 20.

Pitman Joins Sight & Sound Theatres

Mike Pitman has signed on as sales manager, overseeing sales operations for Sight & Sound's three locations including Branson and two in Lancaster, Penn. Pitman most recently served as national marketing director for Fogle Enterprises that includes the Osmond Theatre and five Branson-area restaurants.

He also was vice president of sales and marketing for Ozarks Discovery IMAX Theatre, and has served on numerous area boards and committees. In 1995, Mike partnered with Don Gabriel to form the Christian Business Men's Committee, a group that hosts the annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast.

The Branson theatre currently features "Noah: the Musical" through Oct. 17. On Oct. 31, "Miracle of Christmas" premieres to run through Jan. 2. Call 800-377-1277 or visit www.sight-sound.com.

Kathryn Buckstaff is membership public relations manager for the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. Send your news, happenings and upcoming events for Branson Chamber Chatter to kbuckstaff@bransoncvb.com. Check "Chatter" archives at www.bransonchamber.com in Chamber Info News.