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MOVIE MANIA

Benjy Nelken of The Nelco

MAPPING THE NATION'S FUTURE

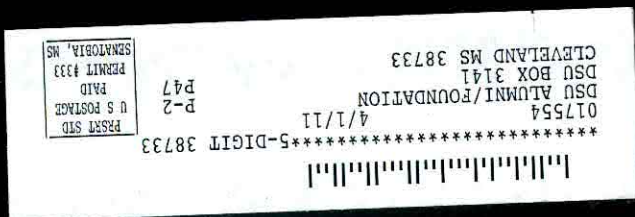
21st century cartography at Delta State University


ROSEANN BUCK

BPAC's new director

SPECIAL REPORTS ►

- YAZOO CITY
- AUTOMOTIVE



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a black sleeveless dress and black sandals, stands in the center of a large, empty theater. She is smiling and has her hands in her pockets. The theater is filled with rows of dark seats, and the ceiling is dark with numerous colorful stage lights (yellow, green, blue) hanging from it. The lighting is dramatic, with the woman being the central focus.

"Delta State and the southern charm and the hospitality of the search committee won me over," says Buck accepting the position to lead the Bologna Performing Arts Center at DSU.

ROSEANN BUCK

New director
wants to
fill seats at
**Bologna
Performing
Arts Center**

By Lynn Lofton
Photograph By Jay Adkins

The new director of the Bologna Performing Arts Center, Roseann Buck, brings solid experience, a fresh perspective and loads of enthusiasm to this state-of-the-art facility on the Delta State University Campus.

She comes from Toledo, Ohio, where she was most recently director of the Valentine Theatre. Dale Vivirito worked with her there for nine years. He's now executive director of the Myrtle Beach Performing Arts Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. He feels her leadership is a great opportunity for the center and for her.

"She was great. I've been running theatres for about 30 years now and have been fortunate to work with people like Roseann," he says. "It was a growing period for her at the Valentine and she took that very well, adding new responsibilities. I predict she'll be successful in this new position. She's shared the news of it with me and she has a good understanding of what the job requires. She's a good match."

Pam Koontz, marketing production manager at Buckeye CableSystem in Toledo, also has no reservations about the job Buck

will do at BPAC. "I've known her for 15 years and served on a board with her where she worked. She was always totally prepared, organized and a joy to work with," she says. "Everything went smoothly at the Franciscan Center in Sylvania, Ohio, and at the Valentine Theatre primarily because of Roseann. She is customer focused."

With BPAC doing a national search and Buck looking for a new position, the match took place. Search announcements were strategically placed where people in the industry would see them.

"I was looking for a new situation; but being very selective, I wanted it to be state-of-the-art because I had experienced that, and to have more than 1,000 seats," Buck says. "I had been at the Valentine for nine years and felt I had done all I could do there."

Buck asked to see all technical specifications of the BPAC and asked her technical directors to look them over. Both were impressed with the technical specs and Buck knew she was headed in the right direction when the Tech Director affirmed that BPAC "can do anything they want to do."



"I applied to two theatres. Both made wonderful offers; but, in the end, the affiliation with Delta State and the southern charm and hospitality of the search committee won me over.

Myrtis Tabb, assistant vice president of finance and administration, said the university is excited to welcome Buck to the BPAC.

"Roseann's resume speaks to her work experience and success in leadership, marketing, budgeting and securing external funding," says Tabb. "However, her interaction with the search team and community leaders was the deciding factor in the decision to offer her the job. She will be a tremendous asset and I am excited about the opportunity to work with her and to introduce her to the

Delta."

Now that she's on the job, Buck feels the BPAC is a jewel. "The university and the area are so fortunate to have this multi-purpose facility," she says. "The university is able to use it for instruction and the music department uses it heavily. The theatre has had a history of presenting first class performances.

"I'm very pleased to be here and looking forward to working here, meeting everyone, and filling the seats. We have a great season planned and sales are very strong," she adds.

A Toledo native, Buck graduated from Notre Dame Academy, an all girls college preparatory school, and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of

Toledo. She did some post graduate work at the University of California at Los Angeles in theater, TV, film and journalism.

She's part of a close knit family that includes a brother, two sisters, and a number of nieces and nephews. Her parents, now deceased, were major influences in her life.

"They led by example. They were creative and encouraged and promoted interest in the arts and education," she says. "They took us as young children to the symphony and all kinds of arts presentations. "I'm very fortunate to have that kind of background."

Buck also feels fortunate to have had a genius marketing and advertising professor who authored two books and became an international consultant. Dale Vivirito was

another generous mentor who shared what he knew with Buck.

The Valentine Theatre is a historic theater that had a \$28 million renovation in 1999 when Buck was there. It's home to the Toledo Opera and booked touring shows like the Bologna does. She notes that two shows coming to BPAC this year were at the Valentine last year, making her familiar with the shows and what they require in a facility.

"The Bologna has no limitations; that appealed to me," she says of her decision to become the director. "It's challenging that we don't have a concentrated population density. People have to drive a little farther to get to the Bologna."

Addressing that challenge, Buck made sure the season brochure is going to more people. "We're increasing the circulation of the brochure to reach more people. The brochure can also be downloaded from the website now," she says. "And we're taking out ads in regional magazines."

She and the staff will also work hard to get students to the theatre, which traditionally attracts an older generation. "My goal is to attract new audiences and to fill the seats of this wonderful performing arts center," she says.

In her short time in Cleveland, Buck has often been asked if she's experiencing culture shock coming from a large city in Ohio to a small town in the Mississippi Delta. So far she hasn't had time to think about it as she immerses herself in the job at hand and learning the area and people.

"I love my work and it becomes pretty consuming. Even when not at work, I'm thinking how I can make improvements," she says. "I don't have a lot of hobbies, but I do enjoy reading and films. My sister has a vacation home in Florida and we're plotting about how we can get together there."

Built with state funding, the Bologna Performing Arts Center opened its doors in 1995 as the first public institution to have a performing arts center in Mississippi. Funding for the center was the number one request of former DSU President Dr. Kent Wyatt for several years during his presidency. He appointed a committee to raise additional funds. The center received a \$2 million gift from Greenville physician Dr. Nino Bologna in honor of his children, Nina Bologna Newton and Sam Bologna. **DBJ**

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