

## Women of Today's sponsor-a-movie campaign gives theatre major boost

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
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*Local organization launches 2011 campaign after raising more than \$8,700 for Chateau Theatre in 2010*

**By Tina Kitt**

**The Wauneta Breeze**

"The theatre holds fond memories for just about everybody who has grown up in Wauneta," observed Wauneta Woman of Today member Laurie Maris. "I think that's why this has been such an easy project to get people to support."

Maris has taken the lead role in organizing the Women of Today's "Movie Sponsor of the Week" campaign to help augment operating expenses at Wauneta's Chateau Theatre. The success of the fund-raising effort has far exceeded the volunteers' original goals.

"It's been pretty overwhelming," says Wauneta Chamber of Commerce treasurer and theatre committee member Kathy Kerchal. "It's been really nice not to have to worry about finances this year."

The Wauneta Chamber, which owns and manages the theatre as a non-profit community entity, has struggled to cover expenses in recent years as the investment income from the Rider Family Endowment has slowed due to low interest rates.

After learning of the Chamber's dilemma, members of Women of Today, a local community-betterment organization, did some brain-storming to see how they could help and the Movie Sponsor of the Week idea was born.

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Initially the goal was to get two movies sponsored each month, with benefactors picking up the \$250 weekly expenses of procuring a movie, including rental, shipping and booking fees. Instead, nearly every movie shown in recent months has been underwritten by local donors to some degree.

During this first year of the Movie Sponsor of the Week campaign, 36 businesses and families have anted up with donations ranging from \$100 to \$500, with most coming in at \$250. In all, \$8,750 was received in movie sponsorships this past year.

“Any size of donation is appreciated,” noted Maris. “Everybody’s generosity went way and above what we thought possible. They have far exceeded our expectations.”

A fresh batch of letters has gone out in recent weeks, with the Women of Today asking 30 possible new sponsors to consider contributing to the effort. This past year’s strong support has organizers optimistic that perhaps each weekend’s movie at the Chateau could be underwritten. That would allow the theatre to use all admission fee money and concession stand receipts to make sure other operating costs like utilities, advertising and insurance are covered. Plus, down the road, upgrades to equipment and the building itself will be needed, notes Maris.

Those wishing to participate in the Movie Sponsor of the Week campaign can send contributions to The Wauneta Women of Today, P.O. Box 51, Wauneta, NE 69045 — with checks made payable to the Chateau Theatre.

An advertisement expressing the gratitude of the Women of Today and Wauneta Chamber listing those who have donated during the campaign’s first year can be found on page 8.

Donors are also acknowledged on an appreciation sign at the theatre as well as being listed on the theatre’s show bills and in the Wauneta Breeze the week a movie is underwritten by their donation.