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Seacoast Theatre gets a furniture donation from XSS Hotels and Colwen Hotel Management

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Shown are members of Seacoast Repertory Theatre's Steel Magnolia's cast enjoying the new furniture.

Portsmouth, NH In April, a truckload of assorted furnishings arrived at the Seacoast Repertory Theatre on 125 Bow St. The furniture was donated by local firms XSS Hotels and Colwen Hotel Management. The delivery consisted of 12 chairs and sofas, and were offered to the theatre by the development partners Leo Xarras, and Mark Stebbins.

The donation came about when Xarras and Stebbins began renovations on a nearby hotel and decided to pay it forward by donating the gently-used pieces to the establishment. It was a welcome sight for the theatre's staff as they watched the newer furnishings taking the place of the older pieces. The previous lobby furniture was more than 10 years old, but with nearly 300 productions per year and about 30,000 overall patrons, it had deteriorated considerably.

Alan Gold, president of the theatre's board of trustees commented on the difference the new furniture has made. "To say that our previous lobby furnishings were 'shabby' is to understate things dramatically, and this donation has enabled us to create the comfortable, more elevated public space that our patrons deserve."

The non-profit, professional regional theatre seats 230 people, and their hundreds of annual productions are designed to appeal to diverse audiences. As such, the lobby is an atrium area that seats patrons before, during, and after the show. "Our lobby has always been a sore spot for us. It is people's first impression of the theatre, and it's not always been a good first impression" said the theatre's Executive Director Kathleen Cavalaro.

Gold stated that public response has been so overwhelmingly positive that it has even encouraged additional donations to their capital improvements. However, for the theater leadership and staff, the general feeling was best summarized by Cavalaro who said, "I never work in my office anymore. Nobody does. It's too comfortable down here."

In the final analysis, the Repertory Theatre donation is one way that XSS Hotels can give back to the community where it has developed multiple projects over the years. And the development firm will continue changing the face of Portsmouth in summer 2019 when the first AC Hotel by Marriott in the Granite State opens on Vaughan Street just a few minutes from the downtown area.

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