



AT THE PROGRESS ENERGY CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 4, 2006
CONTACT: Sabrina Anico, Director of Marketing
sanico@mahaffeytheater.com; 727.892.5706

PROGRESS ENERGY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

City of St. Petersburg Names Cultural Complex

ST. PETERSBURG, FL -- Mayor Rick Baker joined city officials to announce a new partnership with Progress Energy Florida to support of the Mahaffey Theater and the surrounding facilities. This emerging cultural complex will be named the Progress Energy Center for the Arts.

Situated on approximately 19 acres of downtown waterfront, the center includes the existing, newly-renovated Mahaffey Theater plus a civic plaza, offices of The Florida Orchestra, a waterfront park, and the proposed Dali Museum, all scheduled for development within the next two years.

Under the terms of the agreement, Progress Energy has committed to a financial contribution of nearly \$6.3 million over the next 20 years. The city will receive approximately 80 percent of the funds for programming at the center. The balance will be spent directly by Progress Energy to support or promote other activities at the complex.

While naming rights arrangements have been commonplace in the arena and stadium industry, corporate naming of arts facilities is still unique. "Progress Energy again has set a standard for corporate leadership in our community by providing funds needed to ensure programming at the center well into the future," said Mayor Rick Baker. "This beautiful setting with unparalleled options for arts events and outdoor festivities will instantly become a major gathering spot downtown."

SMG, an international organization with over 40 theaters under its management, took over operation of the Mahaffey Theater in November. The funds provided through this agreement with Progress Energy will specifically enhance the arts and entertainment programming. SMG's General Manager of the theater, Chris Fahlman said, "Progress Energy's commitment provides us with an extraordinary and timely resource to pursue expanded programming. It may be used to entice a new promoter to try the building for the first

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MAHAFFEY THEATER AT THE PROGRESS ENERGY CENTER
400 FIRST STREET SOUTH • ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701





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time, give a returning presenter encouragement to try something a little bolder or provide broad support for a longer term programming effort.”

“This is an investment in the future of St. Petersburg, Progress Energy Florida’s hometown,” said Jeff Lyash, incoming president and CEO of Progress Energy Florida. “The Progress Energy Center for the Arts is a key component to enhancing the reputation and economy of this region. We are delighted to add our name to this outstanding complex.”

Open spaces within the complex are being designed for public and flexible use. Construction of the waterfront park will commence this summer and is scheduled to be completed for next year’s Grand Prix in April. Planned features include seating along the water, an airport observation area and easy access from the bike trail.

The civic plaza, connecting the theater and the proposed Dali Museum, will be designed to accommodate a variety of events with a combination of grass and hardscaping. Construction on new administrative offices for The Florida Orchestra will begin this summer.

The site was originally known as the Bayfront Center, an auditorium and arena complex that was built in 1965. The theater underwent significant interior renovations in 1988 and was renamed the Mahaffey Theater. The arena was demolished in 2004 after a feasibility study deemed it to be obsolete and recommended new options for the site and the adjacent waterfront property.

The Mahaffey Theater at the Progress Energy Center for the Arts is St Petersburg’s cultural jewel on the bay. A 2030-seat performing arts center located in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg, the newly renovated facility features breathtaking ballroom spaces and dramatic lobby areas overlooking the Tampa Bay waterfront. Visit www.mahaffeytheater.com for more information. For the Box Office call 727-892-5767. The Mahaffey Theater at the Progress Energy Center for the Arts is managed by SMG. Headquartered in Philadelphia, SMG provides facility services to 195 venues, in 41 states, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Canada and Europe, controls over 1.4 million entertainment seats worldwide. For more information visit www.smgworld.com.

