

For Immediate Release
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American Mountain Theater wins Two West Virginia Tourism Awards

ELKINS, W.Va. – American Mountain Theater has firmly established its place as a shining star of West Virginia’s tourism industry.

The Randolph County attraction known as “The Freshest Sound in the Mountains,” recently added two major awards to its ever-growing resume. President and Producer Kenny Sexton received the “Tourism Professional of the Year Award,” and AMT received the “Mountain State Award” from the West Virginia Division of Tourism. Meggan Sexton, Vice President of Operations, picked up the awards during the Governor’s Conference on Tourism at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Historic Shepherdstown.

The Professional of the Year Award recognizes “an individual who has made an outstanding and significant contribution that enriches West Virginia’s tourism industry, through outstanding job performance, leadership in the tourism industry or development and improvement of tourism facilities and activities.”

Kenny Sexton, co-owner of AMT, enjoys not only putting together amazing music & comedy variety shows, he appreciates the economic impact they have on his community.

“This is truly an amazing and humbling feeling to have the West Virginia Division of Tourism recognize not only my efforts, but the entire efforts of the entire AMT family,” he said.

“When we started AMT in 2007, we knew that if we could find success, we would help the region and state grow with us.”

For the second time in three years AMT also won the Mountain State Award. This award recognizes “the event or facility that stands above the rest in excellence in programming quality, distinctiveness, marketing efforts and/or attendance and impact on the state’s economy and/or image.” Last year, AMT received the “Community Tourism Development Award.”

Numerous businesses and groups in and around Elkins supported AMT’s applications for the Tourism Professional of the Year Award and the Mountain State Award. Since AMT opened its 537-seat, multi-million dollar facility in 2007, it has worked with the Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn, 1863 Tavern, Graceland Inn, RailYard Restaurant, and the adjacent Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad to create significant growth through joint marketing efforts and vacation packaging coordinated by American Mountain Theater.

AMT expects to attract more than 35,000 people in 2012, triple the number from the inaugural season in 2007. Package sales also have increased exponentially, with AMT’s partners receiving \$318,997 and 1,642 room nights in 2011 bookings, with 2012 bookings on target to be nearly double that. The estimated economic impact of AMT to the region is between \$5 million and \$6 million each year.

“I can attest to the impact Kenny has had on our business environment and overall economy,” said Robbie Morris, executive director of the Randolph County Development Authority. “When Kenny started construction of American Mountain Theater’s beautiful new building in our Rail Yard district, he did so with a vision few others would have been capable of having. AMT’s multimillion-dollar, state-of-the-art theater serves as an anchor for other development in Elkins’ central business district.”

Brenda Pritt, executive director of the Randolph County Convention and Visitors Bureau, agreed that Kenny and his talented performers have given her agency a wonderful attraction to promote across West Virginia, the region, and beyond.

“Bus tours have made Elkins their No. 1 destination in the state largely because of Kenny’s tireless efforts to promote not only AMT but the entire region,” Pritt said. “His impacts on Randolph County and the state extend well beyond the shows themselves, however.”

In support of Sexton’s nomination, Kate Reed, executive director of the Elkins-Randolph Chamber of Commerce, noted the great impact of AMT’s 30-minute show, broadcasted nationally on the incredibly popular RFD-TV network.

“AMT brings a great deal of recognition to West Virginia tourism and our region,” Reed said. “Due to their presence in the midst of downtown Elkins, surrounding businesses are continuing to flourish, and new restaurants and attractions are steadily growing because of momentum created by AMT.”

AMT regularly performs its Branson-style Premier Two-Hour show, which includes an eclectic mix of music plus signature comedy and impersonations. The History of American Music Show also is popular, taking people through a century of musical styles in just an hour.

AMT added bluegrass music to its list of offerings and will host the award-winning Del McCoury Band at 3:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 4.

“McCoury is truly a living legend and is a show not to be missed,” Sexton said. “I really encourage folks to come out and take advantage of this great opportunity to hear an all-time great.”

The Southern Gospel Concert Series has grown significantly in just three years, with a series of Sunday afternoon performances in the summer and fall.

Starting the day after Thanksgiving, the Christmas Spectacular reminds people of the real Reason for the Season, the birth of Jesus Christ.

For more information visit AMT’s website, www.americanmountaintheater.com, or call 1-800-943-3670.

Photo Cutlines

AMT Tourism Award_ Kenny Sexton photo:

American Mountain Theater President and Producer Kenny Sexton received the “2012 Tourism Professional of the Year Award” from the WV Division of Tourism.

AMT Tourism Award_ Meggan Sexton photo:

Meggan Sexton, Vice President of Operations for American Mountain Theater, picks up the “2012 Mountain State Award” from Ron Marcus of the WV Tourism Commission during the Governor’s Conference on Tourism at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Historic Shepherdstown.

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