



The Stoughton Courier Hub

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Evergreen bank on financial watchlists

MARK IGNATOWSKI
Unified Newspaper Group

Evergreen State Bank has reported a loss of more than \$12.2 million through June 30, according to a letter to shareholders from the bank's president, James Farrell.

The losses come in part from a failed loan relationship with a business that

closed at the end of May and from writing off of a loan relationship with a real estate development in Sun Prairie.

"As a result of these losses and an additional increase in our loan loss reserve, it is unlikely that the bank will show a profit in 2010," Farrell wrote in the letter.

Last Tuesday, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation released a report showing Evergreen posted the third

highest losses in the state through the second quarter of 2010.

The FDIC had already ordered the bank to make improvements following allegations of unsound lending practices in early 2010.

Evergreen did not admit to any legal or regulatory violations after it was investigated by the FDIC; however, it did agree to hire a consultant to analyze the bank's

management.

"We have hired an experienced credit analyst and a troubled-asset specialist with more than 25 years experience in this market," Farrell wrote. "Both of these officers will provide much needed support to our existing staff."

The FDIC report follows several reports

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the House is a rockin'

Jeff Daniels, at right, who is best known as a movie actor, will show off his talents as a singer/songwriter during the Stoughton Opera House's 2010-11 season. In addition to Daniels, the Opera House has secured big-name acts such as country music sensation Patty Loveless and nineties folk-rock singer Suzanne Vega. Great local and regional acts such as the Wailin' Jennys, the Stoughton Chamber Singers, Yahara River Show and more will also share the stage this season.

Photo courtesy jeffdaniels.com

Online ticketing, big-name acts help bring Opera House into the 21st Century

AUTUMN DRUSSELL
Unified Newspaper Group

Patty Loveless, Suzanne Vega and yes, even Jeff Daniels. The 2010-11 performance schedule for the Stoughton Opera House packs a hefty punch with big names, but balances this season with many returning favorites (such as Iris DeMent, Harry Manx) and local acts (Yahara River Show, Stoughton Chamber Singers) as well as family entertainment (Actor's Factory, Acro Cats) and more.

This blend has been the magic formula for Opera House director, Bill Brehm, and event coordinator, Christina Dollhausen, who have worked hard over the past several years to bring acts that would both fill dates and seats.

"I think the people who worked so hard to get this place restored have to be pretty happy this space is being used the way it is," Dollhausen said.

Indeed. The Opera House, as many know, has quite a history, first opening in 1901, but was left in a sad state in later years, sitting empty and deteriorating to the point city officials talked about tearing it down. When word of that got out, community members rallied and successfully raised enough funds and volunteers to restore the Opera House to its original luster.

Open since 2000, the Opera House has seen its ups and downs over the past decade, but no one can argue that it's growing in popularity. Last year ticket sales were up a

"We know the people who come here really like roots music and bluegrass. It's all over the board in that genre, but typically the audience loves (music) with acoustic roots."

Christina Dollhausen
Event coordinator, Stoughton Opera House

300 whopping percent, which proves the Opera House has been on an upswing the past few years, successfully standing on its own two feet and not financially supported by the city any longer. That's something Brehm is especially proud of, because, as he said, with the city struggling to make ends meet, financial independence ensures the Opera House doors will be open that much longer.

The goal has always been to build on successes from previous years and learn from the mistakes of the past. Part of that has been recognizing what type of music sounds best in the Opera House and what type of music and entertainment people in this area like to see, in addition to branching out and bringing in a variety of entertainment to keep the season fresh.

Last year, the duo topped themselves with larger-than average ticket sales, several sold out shows and a packed

season, with shows every Friday and Saturday. Last year's headliners included The Smothers Brothers, Del McCoury and The Crickets, to name a few. And while the majority of ticket sales last year went to The Smothers Brothers, this year people are buying all across the board, said Brian Brummel, box office ticket sales representative for the Opera House.

"Of course Patty Loveless is getting close to being sold out and acts like Junior Brown, the Wailin' Jennys and Iris DeMent are all doing well," he said. "But the Acro-Cats (a circus cat type show) has sold just as many tickets except for maybe Patty Loveless or Maggie Mae."

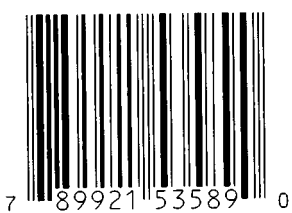
The first half of the 2010-11 season kicks off this Saturday, Sept. 11, with Ramblin' Jack Elliot, a man mentored by Woody Guthrie and called "a long lost father" by Bob Dylan. Elliot brings folk, storytelling and a cowboy blues type poetry to the Opera House stage.

The following weekend, an entirely different type of music will radiate through the venue with 26-year-old music prodigy Esperanza Spalding who has a style that blends jazz, folk and world music.

Country/western music devotees will enjoy Junior Brown, who invented his own six-string/steel guitar to offer a mix of western swing, honky tonk, Bakersfield Country as well as rock and roll.

The first season will also play host to a number of

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Courier Hub



Mayor's \$11 million budget gets flak

KEVIN MURPHY
Hub correspondent

In a three-hour review of her proposed 2011 budget, Mayor Donna Olson took some sharp criticism from some Stoughton alders last Tuesday night.

Ald. David McKichan called the 2.82 percent property tax increase in Olson's \$11 million budget "unacceptable" and told fellow City Council members last week that cutting capital spending isn't a good long-term solution and the city should look at cutting personnel costs.

Others said the city needs to be more creative to keep from adding to the already onerous burden on homeowners.

McKichan said spending less on vehicles and computers, which the city also did last year, ignores the 69 percent of the budget expenditures which are related to personnel costs.

"Pretty soon we'll have a bunch of people with no pencils or computers," he said. "We're supposed to be the people to have the vision to look at the future and look what's out there."

McKichan noted that in response to the biggest recession in

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