



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 2029

## Background

The Red Deer Players Society is a community-driven theatre organization based in Red Deer, Alberta, committed to revitalizing and professionalizing local theatre.

Incorporated in 2014, the Red Deer Players Society emerged from a group of artists seeking alternatives to existing theatre opportunities in Red Deer. Early programming focused on British-style pantomimes, but as the organization evolved, differing artistic priorities surfaced—ranging from highly accessible theatre for people with disabilities to more challenging, thought-provoking work.

By 2017, the organization began articulating a clearer identity: theatre that is impactful, heart-filled, and free of fluff. The path forward was not linear. Periods of inactivity, strained relationships, and reputational challenges revealed the cost of big ideas without sufficient structure or follow-through. These experiences led to hard conversations, tears, and lessons learned about structure and accountability.

Just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans to appoint an Artistic Director fell through, and the disruption of the pandemic further delayed momentum. In 2022, the *Breaking Cover: Comeback Cabaret* marked a turning point—rebuilding trust, re-engaging artists, and signaling a renewed commitment to stability.

Today, the Red Deer Players Society is emerging from its growing pains with greater clarity, professionalism, and resolve—ready to fulfill its founding promise of meaningful theatre for Red Deer and Central Alberta.

## Context

The post-COVID landscape has reshaped how people connect with the arts. Audiences are increasingly seeking authentic, meaningful experiences rather than passive or superficial engagement. At the same time, theatre organizations face real barriers: economic pressures, changing audience behaviors, limited venues, and cultural attitudes that undervalue the arts.

Since 2025, Red Deer Players has intentionally shifted away from burnout-driven volunteerism toward sustainable, professional growth—prioritizing “nice and easy” development over overextension. With a fiscally stable foundation, including an endowment and operational support through interest income, the organization now has the capacity to expand programming thoughtfully and responsibly.

In November 2025, the Board undertook a renewed strategic planning process, grounded in a clear-eyed assessment of current realities, including:

- Shifts toward authentic, relationship-based connection
- Rising barriers to participation and audience commitment
- Economic pressures and changing demographics
- Notification fatigue and skepticism toward impersonal marketing
- Opportunities for collaboration, wellness-focused programming, and intersectional outreach

This strategic plan responds directly to these conditions, aligning the organization’s values, resources, and ambitions to meet the moment.

# Our Strategic Priorities for 2026-2029

Leadership &  
Sustainability

Collaborations

Programming &  
Talent  
Development

Audience &  
Community  
Development

Marketing &  
Identity  
Building

## Vision

A theatre community where every voice and talent finds a place.

## Mission

To foster artistic growth in people and projects through innovative theatre programming, authentic storytelling and new works development.

## Core Values

- **Passion for Growing Theatre Arts:** Providing guidance, training, and mentorship in all aspects of theatre—acting, design, technical work, creation and beyond.
- **Community Connection:** Welcoming amateurs, enthusiasts, and patrons, we create opportunities for participation and shared experiences.
- **Inclusivity & Diversity:** Encouraging diverse voices, stories, and forms of theatre where everyone feels safe and welcome.
- **Professionalism & Accountability:** Building a sustainable structure that supports artists and elevates theatre in Red Deer through transparency and shared responsibility.
- **Creativity & Innovation:** Cultivating new scripts, fresh ideas, and collaboration across theatre groups with respect, trust, and appreciation for each other.
- **Local Talent:** Central Alberta talent prioritized in new works and productions, strengthening local artistic voices.

# 1: Strengthen Organizational Leadership & Sustainability

## Goal

Build a reliable, well-governed organization with long-term financial stability.

## Focus

- Strengthen governance capacity and board effectiveness
- Ensure strong financial stewardship and long-term stability
- Build board mentorship and clear succession pathways
- Commit to follow-through and mutual support

## What Success Looks Like

- Board members feel supported, informed, and confident, improving retention and decision-making
- The organization consistently delivers on commitments, building trust and collaboration
- Clear policies, bylaws, and succession plans support adaptability and long-term growth
- Strong alignment between programming, marketing, and organizational values
- The theatre is recognized as a trusted steward of local artistic talent
- Diversified income streams and prudent budgeting strengthen financial resilience
- Increased donor and sponsor interest driven by visible commitment to local artists

## 2: Expand Collaborations

### Goal

Partner with theatre groups, cultural organizations, and downtown businesses to share resources and grow audiences.

### Focus

- Build partnerships with theatre groups, cultural organizations, schools, and downtown businesses
- Develop co-productions, touring opportunities, and shared programming
- Use alternative and shared spaces for rehearsals, training, and performances
- Encourage shared storytelling and cross-disciplinary work

### What Success Looks Like

- Strong, reciprocal relationships across the local arts and business community
- Expanded creative opportunities for artists beyond traditional roles
- Shared spaces and resources that reduce costs and increase flexibility
- New revenue streams through touring and co-productions
- Broader audience reach through partner networks

## 3: Advance Programming Innovation & Talent Development

### Goal

Support emerging artists through mentorship, training, and meaningful creative opportunities.

### Focus

- Present programming aligned with company values and community relevance
- Foster inclusive, respectful, and psychologically safe creative environments
- Strengthen artist mentorship, training, and playwright development
- Rebuild a clear and accessible artist development pipeline

### What Success Looks Like

- Artists experience a strong sense of belonging and creative support
- Programming and casting reflect authentic diversity across roles and disciplines
- Clear pathways exist for learning, growth, and ongoing engagement
- A functioning training program supports lifelong artistic development
- Artists trained through the organization are well-prepared and sought after

## 4: Deepen Audience & Community Engagement

### Goal

Work with the community to build a wider, more diverse, and loyal audience through accessible and immersive experiences.

### Focus

- Strengthen connections with schools, community organizations, businesses, and members
- Create immersive, participatory, and dialogue-driven theatre experiences
- Expand accessibility through varied pricing, formats, and venues
- Collaborate with community partners to reach diverse audiences

### What Success Looks Like

- A growing, loyal audience that feels connected to the artists and stories
- Increased repeat attendance and word-of-mouth referrals
- Strong community recognition of the theatre's value and impact
- Greater resilience during challenging seasons through community support
- Increased opportunities for audiences to engage with the creative process

## 5: Clarify & Strengthen Marketing Identity

### Goal

Increase awareness of our cohesive identity as a theatre family committed to developing local artists and productions.

### Focus

- Complete a rebrand rooted in inclusivity, warmth, and community
- Shift toward personal, invitation-based marketing approaches
- Reach niche audiences while maintaining a cohesive public identity
- Clearly communicate the value and impact of the theatre's work

### What Success Looks Like

- Consistent brand recognition and shared language across platforms
- Clear public understanding of the theatre as a creative home for local artists
- Artists actively serving as ambassadors for the organization
- Increased trust and goodwill within the community
- Growth in attendance, newsletter subscriptions, and social media engagement
- Recognition of the theatre as a cultural anchor and champion of local talent