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The Bushnell and the Warner Theatre Announce Long-Term Affiliation

HARTFORD & TORRINGTON, CT — The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts and the Warner Theatre today announced that their Boards have approved a long-term affiliation that positions both organizations for new growth opportunities as they prepare for their second century of service to their communities and to patrons across the state of Connecticut.

Under the agreement, which will take effect July 1, 2026, The Bushnell will assume full fiduciary and financial responsibility for the Warner Theatre. The Warner will continue to operate as a distinct nonprofit organization, with its own name, mission, programming, staff, and deep roots in Torrington and Litchfield County.

This affiliation formalizes and builds upon a management relationship that has been in place since 2023.

Since its reopening in 1983 and renovation in 2002 The Warner's primary focus has always been on producing community theatre. The Bushnell, since its opening in 1930, has always had a primary focus on presenting the top national touring concerts events and theatrical productions while serving as the home of many local producing organizations. This affiliation enables The Bushnell to begin the implementation of its objective to produce high quality original content that can eventually tour to venues across the U.S. The affiliation also enables The Warner to expand its presenting activities to serve a larger audience in Northwest Connecticut.

The affiliation reflects a shared recognition that performing arts organizations are operating in an increasingly complex environment, shaped by rising costs, shifting audience behavior, and growing competition for philanthropic support. By aligning operational capacity, the two organizations are creating a more durable structure for long-term success.

Over time, the affiliation also creates the capacity to develop new artistic talent and expand education and workforce development initiatives across the state. This work builds on efforts already underway at The Bushnell and gains new momentum through the Warner's facilities, community connections, and geographic reach.

"This was not a decision made in haste," said Brian Mattiello, Chair of the Warner Theatre Board of Directors. "Our Board approached this with care and a deep sense of responsibility for envisioning and securing the future of the Warner. We believe this affiliation accomplishes that while preserving everything that makes this theatre so important to the soul of the Greater Torrington area." The Warner Theatre remains a community-centered cultural anchor in Northwest Connecticut. Its programming, education initiatives, and local partnerships continue, with new opportunities to expand artistic offerings and invest in the facility over time.

"This builds on what has already been working," said Stephanie Fried, COO & VP of Marketing at The Bushnell. "Over the past several years, we've seen firsthand what's possible when these organizations work together. This next step allows us to do that work with greater clarity, support, and long-term commitment."

"The Warner has long been a vital institution for Torrington and Litchfield County," added Patrick Langevin, VP of Programming at The Bushnell. "This structure allows it to grow in a way that is grounded in community while connected to a broader vision."

The Warner Theatre Board of Directors approved the agreement on May 11, 2026, following approval by The Bushnell Board of Trustees on April 28, 2026. The affiliation will formally take effect July 1, 2026.

The partnership will be introduced publicly at the Warner Theatre's Gala on May 16, where David Fay will be welcomed to the stage by Warner Board Chair Brian Mattiello. Community events in both Torrington and Hartford are planned for later this summer.

About The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

For nearly 100 years, The Bushnell has been central to life in Greater Hartford serving as its unique gathering place for arts, education, and community activities. As a dynamic 21st Century performing arts center, The Bushnell presents, creates, inspires and shares the best in the performing arts; and in partnership with others, serves as a catalyst to advance education, promote economic development and build a sense of community in Central Connecticut. Today, The Bushnell, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, is the State's largest arts organization and has been deemed a "Connecticut Cultural Treasure." Learn More: bushnell.org

About the Warner Theatre

The Warner Theatre is a performing arts center located in the heart of Downtown Torrington, CT's Cultural District. The Warner's mission is to enrich, entertain and educate our communities through high-quality performing arts and arts educational opportunities, preserve the theatre as a historic landmark, and contribute, in partnership with others, to the betterment of our region's way of life and economic vitality. The Warner Theatre is supported by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts. To learn more about the Warner Theatre, visit our website: www.warnertheatre.org.

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