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Borough of Dunellen Announces Monmouth Museum Satellite Location and Actors Studio of New Jersey Residency Through NJEDA A.R.T. Grants

Dunellen, NJ - The Borough of Dunellen is excited to announce the establishment of a Monmouth Museum satellite location in Dunellen and an Actors Studio of New Jersey residency at the Dunellen Theatre, made possible through a combined \$882,896.88 awarded under Phase II of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's (NJEDA) Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation (A.R.T.) Program. These initiatives will strengthen the Borough's downtown while expanding access to the arts.

"Arts and culture are a core part of Dunellen's identity, and we are excited to welcome the Monmouth Museum to our downtown and see the Actors Studio of New Jersey establish a formal residency with the Dunellen Theatre," said Mayor Jason F. Cilento. "We look forward to working with both organizations to create new learning opportunities, enrich the quality of life through the arts, and support economic development by helping make downtown Dunellen a destination for visitors, an amenity for our residents, and a place where our children can learn, explore, and be inspired."

The Monmouth Museum has received a \$500,000 grant through the NJEDA A.R.T. Program to establish a satellite location in downtown Dunellen, in partnership with the Borough of Dunellen. The new space, located at 266 North Avenue, will feature exhibitions, hands-on educational programming, and community-focused cultural experiences, providing arts and STEAM-based learning opportunities for residents of all ages.

"We are thrilled to bring the Monmouth Museum's mission and creativity to downtown Dunellen. This additional location gives us the chance to connect with families, schools, and community members in a meaningful way and to make arts and culture more accessible than ever. I'm grateful to Mayor Cilento for believing in this vision and excited for all that we will build together," said Erika Schaefer, Executive Director of the Monmouth Museum.

In addition, The Actors Studio of New Jersey has received a \$382,896.88 grant through the

NJEDA A.R.T. Program to establish a residency at the historic Dunellen Theatre. The funding will support the development and presentation of theatrical productions based in Dunellen, utilizing the Theatre for rehearsals, performances, and related programming. The residency will bring high-quality productions to the Theatre and strengthen Dunellen's status as a destination for high-quality performing arts in New Jersey.

"As Artistic Director of The Actors Studio of New Jersey, it brings me great joy—along with our incredible creative team and board of directors— to begin this new chapter in partnership with the Dunellen Theatre," said Michael Restaino, Artistic Director of the Actors Studio of New Jersey. "Together, we look forward to enriching the community with fresh, innovative, and inspiring theatrical experiences right here in Dunellen. At The Actors Studio of New Jersey, our mission is to cultivate artistic excellence, celebrate diverse voices, and create transformative theater that connects, challenges, and inspires our audiences. As we look ahead to our 2026 season, we are deeply committed to carrying this mission forward—expanding our creative reach, engaging new audiences, and building an exciting new era of live performance at the Dunellen Theatre."

"After being a part of Dunellen for 57 years and operating the Dunellen Theatre since 1987, I am thrilled and grateful to partner with Michael Restaino and The Actors Studio of New Jersey as we recognize the Theatre's 103-year history," said Pam Zupko, owner of Zupko's Tavern & the Dunellen Theatre. "The Theatre has evolved over the years, hosting everything from first-run movies to national tribute bands to live performances, and this collaboration will help bring live performing arts back to Dunellen. I want to thank Mayor Cilento for introducing me to Michael and for his continued support of the arts in our community."

Additional information regarding the Monmouth Museum's satellite location and The Actors Studio of New Jersey will be available soon.