



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Marin Center Accessibility Improvements Achieved** ***Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012***

**Lagoon Park, San Rafael, CA** – If you have driven along Civic Center Drive in San Rafael recently, you have probably noticed that the Marin Center - especially the Marin Veterans' Auditorium and Children's Island – is receiving a lot of attention! The Marin County Board of Supervisors is proud to announce completion of two of the County's most exciting accessibility projects at the Marin Center, by inviting the public to the official grand opening/ribbon cutting ceremony at **3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**, at the entrance to the Marin Veterans' Memorial Auditorium.

First, the Marin Veterans' Memorial Auditorium project provides new accessible parking areas, improved path of travel to Auditorium entrances, improved secondary entrances, and a new main entrance plaza. These improvements replaced former disabled access barriers such as stairways, steps, and ramps, and created a picturesque plaza for public events and gatherings. An accessible path of travel to the nearby Children's Island was also constructed. Maximizing access for persons with disabilities resulted in improved safety and convenience for all patrons of the arts attending cultural programs at the Auditorium.

*"The significant improvements at these heavily-used venues highlight our commitment to providing barrier-free access to public facilities throughout the County,"* lauds Supervisor Steve Kinsey.

Next, the accessibility improvements of the Children's Island, site of annual Marin County Fair concerts and other public events, have transformed the under-developed island into a beautiful park-like venue suitable for a variety of events and celebrations. New trees, paths, and seating are included in a hardscape and lawn design that not only makes the concerts accessible to all, but also creates new accessible paths to food concessions and sanitary facilities provided during the Fair.

*"Thanks to the leadership of the Board of Supervisors, Marin Center will now have more welcoming access for all guests, and especially guests with disabilities. Over*

*900,000 people attend events at Marin Center annually and this project offers a 21<sup>st</sup> century + graceful setting to enjoy performing arts, conference and festival events. We are thrilled!"* said Cultural Services Director Jim Farley.

Danadjieva Hansen Architects, Inc. of Tiburon was the Project Architect for the Auditorium project with Landscape Architecture support from Brian Powell & Associates of San Rafael. Powell was the Children's Island project designer. Ghilotti Brothers, Inc. of San Rafael was the low bidder and construction contractor for both projects. County Project Managers Lawrence Beaton and Cam Isaza stewarded the projects from design to completion overcoming numerous unforeseen obstacles and coordinating with multiple County department stakeholders, including County Parks and Cultural Services.

Bill Campagna, County Disability Access Manager, said, *"These projects were designed using the concept of Universal Design so that they are both aesthetically pleasing and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone"*.

The Marin Veterans' Memorial Auditorium is also part of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Marin County Civic Center, a national- and state-designated historic landmark. Wright's 770th commission, the Civic Center is the last and one of the most important works by this internationally acclaimed architect who has been described as "one of the most creative architectural geniuses of all time" and "the most original architect the United States has ever produced." Frank Lloyd Wright died on April 9, 1959, at the age of 92, and did not see his vision completed. Taliesin Senior Architect Wesley Peters and San Francisco Bay Area Taliesin Architect Aaron Green directed the completion.

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