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# Times Editorial

## A stroke of genius

### Nonprofit status could save AMP

Last spring it seemed as though music fans across Northwest Arkansas might have

already enjoyed their last fun-filled concert at the Arkansas Music Pavilion. Rumors circulated in years past that the outdoor entertainment venue, which annually rises from the asphalt surrounding the Northwest Arkansas Mall, wasn't exactly the biggest financial success.

Then, in April 2007, Dan White, one of its owners, let it be known that AMP backers were looking to raise \$85,000 in a few days' time. The future of the AMP's third season was apparently on the line. Just in the nick of time, donor dollars came in, and the AMP kicked off another successful season of great performances. Still, backers pondered ways to make the AMP a sustainable venture.

Enter the announcement last week that the AMP is evolving into a nonprofit organization before the beginning of the 2008 spring/summer concert season. Doing so offers tax deductibility for donations and will create an organization that can share its success through grants to local artists or groups.

Amy Mack White, AMP vice president of communications, says now the general idea is to bring in big national acts and then invest proceeds from those performances into the local arts community. Mack White says the decision has nothing to do with the financial challenges of 2007.

Is going nonprofit the best way to preserve the positive influence on the local performance scene that the AMP has had? That's hard to say, having not been privy to the financial conditions of the privately run AMP. But it seems like AMP officials are onto something. Tax deductibility seems to be a nice added benefit for those corporations and individuals who want to put their money where their musical tastes are. No, one wouldn't expect a donor to make a contribution only for the deductibility, but that sure might make the difference if a potential donor is sitting on the fence.

Although it remains a bit strange to see such performances take place on a tent-covered parking lot, the AMP has made it work with the resources available. What's not to like about an organization bringing great musical acts to Fayetteville? The crowds we've witnessed there sure had a good time. And nobody should discount the value of having such cultural offerings when it comes to trying to attract potential companies to this community. They know that their employees want nice things to do. And if Fayetteville seriously wants to become a technologically centered economic powerhouse, the people employed by those sorts of companies will expect great amenities to enjoy in their time off.

We hope the AMP's move to nonprofit status is the right one to continue promoting performances of great bands or individuals, not just a reaction to actually lacking a profit. And ultimately, we hope the Arkansas Music Pavilion finds a long-term, successful and permanent home in Fayetteville.