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LOCAL STAGE WORKERS COME TO THE AID OF THE BALLET

(San Jose, CA) Donald S. Ricker, Business Agent for International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) announced today that locals #134 (Stagehands) and #784 (Wardrobe) have offered to extend their contracts freeze their wages at last year's rates for all work performed for Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley's 2000-2001 season.

Stagehand Richard Woodard, who has been working with the ballet since 1986, was proud of his union for helping out Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley. "We want to make sure that what happened in Cleveland does not happen here," said Woodard. "This arts organization has been very good to us, and this is our way of giving a little something back. If this helps establish our own local ballet company, that would be great for San Jose and Silicon Valley. And in the long run, it could mean more work for our union."

Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley was recently formed from elements of the old San Jose Cleveland Ballet. The formation of the company came just eight days after San Jose Cleveland Ballet's co-venture partner (Cleveland San Jose Ballet) ceased operations on September 7th and released its troupe of 38 dancers from their contracts. San Jose and Cleveland had shared dancers and repertoire since 1986, but the two organizations were separate corporations, each with its own budget, staff and board of directors. SJC's local Board of Trustees immediately acted to sign the dancers to a new contract and save the San Jose season.

Anne Polland, Business Agent for IATSE #784 in San Francisco (Wardrobe) said, "Our membership is passionate about the arts and enjoy and treasure the ballet in San Jose. We are very excited about having a San Jose-Silicon Valley based company. This is our way of saying, 'welcome'." Local #784 is responsible for building and mending costumes and also dresses the dancers for backstage changes.

Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley Executive Director Andrew Bales was very touched by the generous offer of the two unions. "People throughout the Bay Area have been so supportive over the last two weeks," said Bales. We are getting calls on a daily basis from our subscribers and donors. But when the people on the front lines?those who are actually working the shows?come forward and offer to contribute, that is something really special."

Note: In a late development, Garden State International Trucking has also donated free trucking equipment for the season to the Ballet. This includes trucks and trailers to move all sets, costumes, floors, lights, sound and related equipment.

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Possible Interview Candidates:

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