

Worrell 4/8/04

Arts center can spur redevelopment

To the Editor:

Your April 1 editorial criticizing the support by the County of Union for the Union County Arts Center in Rahway does not paint an accurate picture of the arts center and what it means to the City of Rahway and the county.

Other similar arts centers across New Jersey, including the John Harms Center in Englewood, the State Theatre in New Brunswick and the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, all receive significant public funds that would make continued operations extremely difficult, if not impossible. This investment has long received bipartisan support and has been lauded as a worthy and noble goal of all levels of government.

The county's support for the Union County Arts Center is welcome and needed if the facility is to thrive in the future. It will be instrumental in expanding the productions offered at the arts center and make it a year-round destination rather than one open only from October through May. Hundreds of county governments nationwide have used the arts to spur economic development and more importantly, improve the quality of life for their residents.

I applaud the freeholders for their vision on how the arts in Union could make our city and county a better place to live and work.

Mayor James J. Kennedy
Rahway