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Catharine Young

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CATHARINE YOUNG August 8, 2007

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96 Years Of Laughs

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By JESSICA WASMUND - Jamestown Post-Journal

What better way for Lucy fans to celebrate what would be the comedienne's 96th birthday than watching their favorite actress's center receive a \$100,000 present. At the kick-off for the Lucille Ball birthday celebration weekend Friday, state Sen. Cathy Young, R-Olean, presented Ric Wyman with a check for \$100,000. "Lucille Ball just gave so much joy in her lifetime, and I've met people who've

come here from Chicago and Ohio, and it just proves how important her legacy is for the local economy,” Sen. Young said.

“She’s a hometown girl, and it will be great to see this money used to attract even more people here.”

Wyman was thrilled to accept the check on behalf of the Lucy-Desi center, and revealed that the money had already been ear-marked for an expansion project.

“We’ll be acquiring the D&K at 10 W.

Third St. to add on as an expansion — we’ve been at our original location since 1996,”

Wyman said. “We’re looking to get Lucy’s Mercedes out of storage, as well as hundreds of other artifacts that we’ve collected over the years from Lucie (Arnaz) and Desi Jr. that we haven’t had a place to showcase.”

According to Wyman, the facility is still in the development stages right now, and the grant will be used to actually acquire the property itself.

“We’ve always been committed to growth and development,

and this new facility will do more justice to the Lucy-Desi museums,” Wyman said. Wyman estimates that the new building will be up and running in time for next year’s festival. However, for the next few days, Jamestown will continue to feel Lucy fever.

“You’ve just gotta love Lucy — I love Lucy – she was a wonderful lady from Jamestown, a wonderful and special place,” said Mayor Sam Teresi. “Today we’re celebrating the 96th birthday of one of the most famous redheads and top women entertainers of all time.”

More than 30 different events will be taking place through Sunday, and a variety of special guests will be on hand for Lucy fans to meet. Included in those guests are

Wanda Clark and Grank Goorey, Lucy's secretary and chauffeur, respectively. There will also be an unveiling of a new book, "Lucy At The Movies," with author Cindy De La Haz available to speak. A number of Hollywood favorites will also be in town, including Jerry Maren, one of the original munchkins from The Wizard of Oz and a guest star on Here's Lucy; Joe and Michael Mayer, who shared the role of toddler-aged Little Ricky; Shirley Mitchell, who played Marion Strong on I Love Lucy; and four-time Emmy Award winner Ret Turner, Lucy's costumer designer. Turner will be hosting the Lucille Ball fashion show Sunday afternoon. A full schedule of events of available at the Lucy-Desi center's Web site, www.lucydesi.com.

“This is a very special day,
because we are recognizing the
powerful and profound effect
laughter has on our general
well-being,” Sen. Young said.

“Lucy gave this gift to the
entire world, and today we
honor her.”