

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Michael Prince keeps Arts Center programs and productions on budget

It takes a team of creative backstage technicians, artists and designers to produce a musical like *Smokey Joe's Café*. Behind these behind-the-scenes theater professionals is Michael Prince, the man holding the purse strings.

As Controller and chief penny counter, Prince is charged with keeping the Arts Center's productions and programs on budget — a job that requires a different kind of ingenuity.



Michael Prince

"If we overspend in one area, I've got to find a way to cut back in another," said Prince, who joined the Arts Center's administrative staff last July. "We can't print money, and we can't operate on a deficit. The bottom line has to be zero."

It's a constant balancing act — staying in the black while providing quality programming.

Working with the senior staff, Prince is currently developing the budget for the 2011/12 season. Throughout the year, he'll prepare monthly financial statements to keep track of the Arts Center's revenues and expenditures.

"I'm here to make sure we have the money to make our productions successful," Prince said. "If needed, I'll make adjustments during the year. It can be as little as \$5. Every penny counts."

A graduate of Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance, Prince began his career as General Manager of a family-owned movie theater business. He went on to become Manager of Information Systems for Cross

Country Inns in Dublin, Ohio.

In 2001, Prince and his wife moved to the Lowcountry to work for the Hilton Oceanfront Resort. He took the position of Assistant Director of Finance. Three years later, he was promoted to Director of Finance.

"I've always loved music and movies, but the theater is a new venture for me," said Prince, who grew up in central New York, the youngest of nine children. "It's not something I grew up with."

Prince was first drawn to the theater in Columbus. His wife, Kathy, suggested they subscribe to the Broadway Series at the Ohio Theater.

"Needless to say, we were hooked," Prince said. "Since then, we've traveled to New York and Toronto to see shows. Most recently, we visited Charlotte to see *Wicked* and Savannah for *Mamma Mia*."

His 11-year-old daughter Madeline has

Continued on page 40

Staff Profile *Continued from page 38*

already caught the bug. A member of the Hilton Head Choral Society's Youth Choir, she is especially fond of musicals.

"We have seen some really outstanding shows at the Arts Center," Prince said. "It's the high quality of our productions that will ensure our continued success."

But even with rave reviews, ticket sales cover only half the cost of operating the Arts Center. The other half has to come from contributions.

"These days more people are going after a smaller financial pie," Prince said. "We're constantly trying to cultivate new avenues to sustain the arts we produce."