Skip to the loo, ladies: Potty parity has arrived

By LISA GUTIERREZ

Starlight Theatre patrons are flush with excitement. In a couple of weeks, the theater will host a $4.5 million remodeling project. A major piece: Potty parity.

"We are pleased to announce that we have increased the number of women's restrooms to 52, compared with 47 for men's," says Bob Rock, Starlight's executive producer.

"And every night we did it, it was the same reaction," Rock adds. "People were fighting for the women's restrooms, and there was a lot of applause. It was startling," says Bob Rock, Starlight's executive producer.

Survey says

In a survey of four years ago, 500 American women by the maker of urinary tract-infection medicine -- we kid you not -- 98 percent said that when coming into a theater with long lines at a public bathroom they would rather "hold it" and go later.

Public venues in Kansas City, women don't have even half the fixtures that men have at their disposal.

What's up at Starlight!

A $3.5 million renovation project will begin in early September and should be finished before next season. It involves:

- The addition of a second screen on the east side.
- Remodeling the east side concession stand, changing high-speed equipment and changing the configuration to accommodate 25 screens.
- The south side of the east side.
- Rebuilding the Encore Deck on the east side, with seating for 200好奇tions.
- For more about the project, go to kestarlight.com.

That's just half the solution. Taylorsville Road is a menace to be solved, and the area is ripe for development.

Chat room for equality. But until women stand up for their rights, as they are everywhere, the answer is simple: Women must make their voices heard.

That's the way Anthony says. "It's really equal access, equal time. If the men are walking in line and the women are walking in line, then that's OK. That's parity.

Seating continuity

Kansas City architect Marshall Minich has complaints about the seats, especially from female friends and relatives. Why can't you design a sports stadium that has enough restrooms for women?

He just did.

Minich, of 350 Architecture, was the project architect for the T-Bones stadium and belongs to a local team of firms designing to design the new $25 million downtown arena, for which Potty parity issues have yet to be discussed. (Read: There's still hope, ladies.)

At the T-Bones stadium, the team's owners built 64 percent more than the minimum number of women's restrooms accommodations required by Kansas City, Kan., minimum requirements for public restrooms.

But "plumbing is not cheap," Minich says. Every fixture is cost more than what the eye sees, he says, requiring a water supply and drainage, and occupying space that, per square foot, can really add to the cost of a building. Design costs add in, too, to create traffic flows that help cut down on the lines.

At Chiefs games, women have access to only a fourth of the facilities, so Arrowhead sets out portable toilets around the stadium and parking lots. Other venues have tried to ease the wait by offering using communal bath rooms. (No more sneaking into the men's room when no one's looking.)

Yet there's a dearth of change in the air, thanks to lawsuits, new potty parity laws and venues such as Starlight and the T-Bones baseball stadium in Kansas City, Kan., acknowledging that if Mama ain't happy, a'trickles isn't happy.

Designers working on the $304 million performing arts center downtown promise to always give women's restrooms restrooms than required by code so no one wastes another person's time.

When he gives tours of his new Concourse that hasn't been designed yet, "I see a lot of growth, a lot of excitement."