

After Hours Improv

Shari and Smiley Alfaro have always had a passion for making other people laugh, but their dream of operating their own theater was almost derailed. From an improvisation workshop led by Eric Craddock, the Alfaro's started [After Hours Improv](#) (AHI) in 2004. Along with Eric and Patrick Wilson, they then held their first public appearance in downtown Waxahachie at the College Street Pub. The Alfaro's were performing regularly with their comedy troop in 2007 at the Texas Theater when the venue surprisingly came up for sale. Due to its rich history, the City of Waxahachie decided to purchase the theater and lease it to a company that would operate it as an independent business. Although the Alfaro's submitted an impressive proposal, another company with prior experience in managing theaters was selected.

It appeared their chance to operate their own theater had slipped away when they found another location inside the historic Rogers Hotel also located in downtown Waxahachie. In addition to providing upscale office space, the newly renovated hotel offered a unique opportunity for several businesses on the first floor. Shari and Smiley signed a lease, and the hotel's previous 1,200 square foot dining room soon became AHI's new home. The theater officially opened on October 3rd 2010, to a sell-out crowd.

The Alfaro's knew marketing would play a key role in the success of the theater. They met with Robin Lasher, Director of the Navarro College SBDC, who assisted them with the marketing section of the proposal for the Texas Theater. From that proposal, they had already developed a marketing plan for AHI and quickly began to adapt it to their new location. Shari stated, "It was very helpful to be able to bounce ideas off Robin. Instead of just giving an opinion, she would always try to find information and facts that supported our ideas." In addition to stand-up and spontaneous improvisational comedy, AHI has recently introduced a Murder Mystery Dinner where the audience takes an interactive role. The theater also partners with non-profit organizations by offering Charity Nights that combines a revenue sharing fundraising opportunity for local charities. Improvisational workshops are offered to both adults and children, and the theater is available for rental for corporate meetings, private parties, and weddings.

Offering clean, professionally presented "Serious Comedy" and family oriented entertainment, AHI has continued to be a highly successful venture with plenty of laughs.