



## Florida Theatre Announces Details About New Seats, Adopt-A-Seat Program and Centennial Club

**Jacksonville, Fla. (August 10, 2020)** – The Florida Theatre has officially announced details about their new seats, Adopt-A-Seat program and exclusive Centennial Club.

The seat renovation, which is part of an overall five-year, 10-million-dollar capital improvement plan at the Theatre, was originally scheduled for the summer of 2021. "A couple of weeks ago, it started to become apparent that we won't be opening soon due to the pandemic. I started wondering if it would be possible to accelerate the seating project and get it done this fall. The answer from all of the architects, designers, managers and contractors involved was, 'yes!'" said Florida Theatre President, Numa Saisselin. "By Thanksgiving, we will have brand new seats in the Florida Theatre."

The new seats are being manufactured by Irwin Seating, a world leader in the design and manufacture of theatre seating, especially for historic theatres, and will achieve several goals:

**Comfort:** The new seats will be wider, and the new balcony seats have a slim profile seat bottom that allows for more leg room.

**Historic Preservation:** The new seats will be historically appropriate to the design of the vintage 1927 Florida Theatre, with burgundy fabric, wood seat backs with a reveal, wood arm rests, and cast iron aisle ends created from a cast of the theatre's original aisle ends. The Theatre's famous "Ghost Seat", balcony seat E1, and its companion seat E2, are being shipped to Irwin Seating in Grand Rapids to be fully restored. "We did not want our ghost to be homeless if his or her seat went away permanently. They are the only two seats being restored. Every other seat is being replaced. Hopefully the Ghost does not mind being without his or her seat for a few weeks," said Saisselin.

**Safety:** Aisle lighting is being increased upstairs and downstairs, additional handrails are being installed in the balcony, and a conduit under the orchestra floor will eliminate the sound and lighting control cable often gaff taped to the floor by touring productions.

**Accessibility:** Appropriately, in the 30th anniversary year of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the amount of wheelchair accessible seating will be doubled.

The Theatre has also unveiled the new **Adopt-A-Seat** program, which allows patrons to customize a seat with a special brass commemorative plaque, engraved with the name or message of their choice. Seats in the orchestra and the loge are \$1,000 each and seats in the balcony are \$500 each. The plaque will remain in place for the lifetime of the seats.

Donations to the Adopt-A-Seat program will be used to match a dollar-for-dollar capital improvement contribution from the City of Jacksonville, which in 2019 pledged five million dollars towards the overall 10-million-dollar capital improvement plan.

Patrons who Adopt-A-Seat by November 9, 2020 become a member of the **Centennial Club**, which ties into the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Florida Theatre in 2027. Centennial Club members will be recognized with an invitation to an exclusive seat unveiling event and have their name listed on the Centennial Campaign donor plaque, the Centennial Campaign donor list in the Theatre's Ovation playbill and on the Centennial Campaign website.

"For over 35 years the nonprofit Florida Theatre has been an engine for downtown growth, creating the full-time equivalent of over 400 jobs a year, and an economic impact for Jacksonville of \$13 million a year, which supports \$10 million of household income, \$683,000 of state government revenue, and \$570,000 of local government revenue last year alone," said Saisselin. "With this project and the public's support we will re-open stronger than ever before."

For more details on the Florida Theatre's Adopt-A-Seat program and Centennial Club, please visit [www.floridatheatre.com/adopt-a-seat](http://www.floridatheatre.com/adopt-a-seat).

**The historic, nonprofit Florida Theatre is sponsored by Community First Credit Union. For a complete list of upcoming events or to buy tickets visit the Theatre's official website [floridatheatre.com](http://floridatheatre.com).**

[About Florida Theatre](#): From ballet and opera to contemporary pop, jazz, rock, country and blues the nonprofit Florida Theatre offers 200 cultural and entertainment events annually for every taste and age. More than just an entertainment center, Florida Theatre is also home to graduations, awards ceremonies, lectures, business meetings and charity events that support the community's schools, churches, hospitals and civic groups. As an anchor to downtown development along the beautiful St. Johns River, Florida Theatre draws 250,000 people to Jacksonville's center each year. The magnificently restored Florida Theatre is recognized as one of the finest concert venues in the Southeast. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Florida Theatre holds special memories for four generations. From the Vaudeville acts and silent films of its earliest days to today's blend of performances of all kinds, the Florida Theatre has served as Jacksonville's premier entertainment center since 1927.

For more information about the Florida Theatre's Adopt-A-Seat Program, please contact Meredith Jespersen, Membership Manager at (904) 562-5995 or [meredith@floridatheatre.com](mailto:meredith@floridatheatre.com).

For media inquiries, please contact Jake Brown, Director of Marketing at [Jake@floridatheatre.com](mailto:Jake@floridatheatre.com).

###