

For Immediate Release

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FLORIDA THEATRE ANNOUNCES A \$10 MILLION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

***THE HISTORIC, NONPROFIT THEATRE WILL MATCH FUNDS
FROM THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE***

***THE 5-YEAR PROJECT WILL ADDRESS THE WEAR AND TEAR ON ONE OF THE
MOST ATTENDED VENUES IN THE COUNTRY***

(JACKSONVILLE, FL.) Nov. 14, 2019 --Florida Theatre President Numa Saisselin was joined by the Honorable Mayor Lenny Curry and Florida Theatre First Vice Chair Leslie Gordon to announce a \$10 million, five-year capital improvement plan for the historic, nonprofit Florida Theatre.

The Theatre has received gifts and pledges from 72 donors totaling \$2,143,470. Earlier this year, the Theatre implemented a \$2.50 restoration fee on all ticket purchases, which is expected to net an additional \$1.5 million over the next 5 years.

The Theatre has applied to the Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs and Division of Historical Resources for grants totaling more than \$600,000. The grants in those programs will not be awarded until next year.

"Including gifts, pledges and ticket fees, when matched by the City funds we are \$7.2 million towards our \$10 million goal," said Saisselin. "We are confident that the leadership of Jacksonville and our community understands the importance of the Florida Theatre, and will help us raise the additional funds needed to meet our goal."

"It has been 36 years since the Theatre was first renovated and reopened as a performing arts venue in 1983," said Saisselin. "It has been 25 years since the last capital improvement project in 1994. Physical assets like the auditorium seats, and the public restrooms are wearing out. Our lighting, sound and projection systems are all more than 25 years old, which is ancient in technology terms."

The specific projects that this Capital Campaign will accomplish:

- A new sound system.
- Upgrades to the stage lighting system.
- A new digital projection system.
- Replacing the Theatre's 1,900 seats with new but historically appropriate seats.
- Bathroom improvements to make better use of the physical space.
- Expanded lobby space.
- Improved accessibility for the differently abled.
- Restoration of the Theatre's historic marquee and sign boards.
- Painting the interior of the Theatre and lobbies.

The cost of these projects totals \$10 million. The funding will come in part from the City of Jacksonville, which has included in its fiscal 2020 budget the first \$1 million of a projected \$1 million a year for 5 years total match. The rest of the funding will come from the Florida Theatre, which will match the City's funds.

"For nearly a century, the Florida Theatre has been an icon in the Jacksonville community," said Mayor Lenny Curry. "From the famous sign and marquee board out front, to the beautiful and intricate interiors, this amazing location has brought thousands of guests and artists to downtown Jacksonville. The City is proud to invest in this beloved community asset."

The improvements funded by the Capital Campaign are slated for completion in time for the Theatre's historic 100th anniversary in 2027.

Located in the heart of downtown Jacksonville, the Florida Theatre is one of the most attended entertainment venues in the country.

In an average year, the theatre hosts more than 175 performances. Concerts, dance recitals, educational programs and community outreach events, such as Civic Cinema, are attended by about 150,000 adults and 25,000 school children, making the Florida Theatre one of the Top 5 most attended venues up to 2,000 seats in the country, according to the concert industry magazine *Pollstar*. For the past two years, the Theatre has been named the most attended sports and entertainment venue in the State of Florida, according to the venue management industry magazine *VenuesNow*.

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 web site floridatheatre.com.

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