

Egyptian Theatre receives \$200K grant from Illinois Office of Tourism

DEKALB – The Egyptian Theatre in Downtown DeKalb is excited to announce it has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Illinois Office of Tourism. This state grant, which hasn't been awarded since 2015, will help bolster the state's tourism industry which generated over \$3 billion in tax revenue for state and local communities last year.

The Tourism Attraction Grant Program will help develop new or enhance existing tourism attractions to grow visitation and overnight stays in Illinois. Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) provided grant funding to 13 organizations in the amount of \$1.4 million. There was significant demand for this grant program, receiving four times the number of requests than available funding.

"Travel and tourism in Illinois is a \$40 billion industry and we are glad to support our communities in their efforts to attract new and returning visitors to their attractions," said Erin Guthrie, Acting Director of the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO). "We are glad DCEO can support the tourism economy in local communities with these grant programs."

The Egyptian Theatre is embarking on a \$4.5 million expansion that will consist of a two-story addition that will add restrooms, concessions and storage spaces that will enhance the visitor experience at the historic theatre. Most importantly, installation of air conditioning will allow the theatre to remain open year-round with programming. This will dramatically grow the cultural and economic annual impact that the Theatre contributes to the region. It will also significantly improve the ongoing preservation efforts of the historic building that is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, named in the Top 20 Architectural Treasures by the State of Illinois Tourism and named 1 of 150 Great Places in Illinois by the American Institute of Architects.

"We are thrilled to be recognized as one of the premier tourist attractions in the State of Illinois," Alex Nerad, Executive Director at the Egyptian Theatre said. "The Egyptian Theatre is a jewel of DeKalb and a tremendous asset in the State of Illinois. This project will build upon that success and prepare the Egyptian for the next 90 years."

The Egyptian Theatre currently welcomes over 40,000 people through its doors each year. These patrons come from 36 different states and 47 counties in Illinois resulting in over \$2 million in direct economic impact. Current projections show the new year-round programming will increase attendance to over 54,000 with a total direct economic impact in excess of \$3 million.

"This is a real honor to receive this grant," said Dan Schewe, Egyptian Theatre Board President. "We are extremely grateful for this funding support in addition to the City of DeKalb TIF funding and many individual donors."

For more information and to keep up on the latest news regarding this expansion, please visit www.egyptiantheatre.org.

The Egyptian Theatre located at 135 N. 2nd Street in Downtown DeKalb, IL is owned and operated by Preservation of Egyptian Theatre, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit

organization. Annual support provided by First National Bank, Northwestern Medicine, Shaw Media, and Tapa La Luna.