

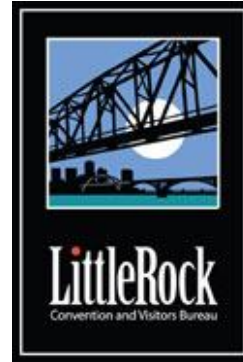
## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Angela Rogers, Angela Rogers Group for  
Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau  
(501) 940-5636

[angela@angelarogersgroup.com](mailto:angela@angelarogersgroup.com)



## **LITTLE ROCK ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION ANNOUNCES ARCHITECT FOR ROBINSON CENTER RENOVATION**

The Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission (LRAP) today announced the selection of “Polk Stanley Wilcox & Ennead Architects” to design a major expansion and renovation of Robinson Center and Robinson Center Music Hall. The selection was made following the release of the official Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in October of 2012 which asked architectural design firms, together with appropriate consultants to submit their qualifications for the expansion and renovation of the 1939 historic structure.

The selection process began with 13 submittals. It was narrowed down to four finalists via a committee review, and then LRAP heard presentations from the four finalists on November 29, 2012. LRAP further narrowed the field to two at a special meeting on December 18, 2012. Earlier today, Polk Stanley Wilcox of Little Rock, partnered with Ennead Architects of New York and Witsell, Evans, Rasco of Little Rock, partnered with LMN Architects of Seattle answered a series of additional questions put together by the commission and staff.

Polk Stanley Wilcox and Ennead Architects are recognized regionally, nationally and internationally for compelling and innovative architecture. Both firms embrace creative design solutions that are rooted in the context of time and place and seek to create meaningful architecture that is timeless in execution and relevant to the built environment for subsequent generations. Between the two firms, some notable projects include: William J. Clinton Presidential Center and Park, Oklahoma City Civic Center, Carnegie Hall, Heifer International, and the New York City Center.

The LRCVB desires to renovate Robinson Center to improve function, acoustics and aesthetics, creating a state-of-the-art performance and conference facility commensurate with the quality of life for which Little Rock is known. It is anticipated that additions will be constructed on the north and west sides of the existing building to provide additional meeting, conference and service capabilities. It is also anticipated that the exterior envelope of the existing building will undergo restoration.

“We are very excited about this project. Robinson Center has long been an icon in Little Rock and has served the community and our region very well over the past 70+ years. However, it is in desperate need of upgrades and renovations in order to become the performing arts center that our city deserves.” said Gretchen Hall, President and CEO of the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The level of expertise

and experience from all of the submittals was tremendous and the final selection was very difficult. We are incredibly eager to begin working with the Polk Stanley Wilcox and Ennead team.”

The Robinson Center renovation is tentatively anticipated to take place from summer 2014 through fall 2016, and run concurrently with the anticipated Arkansas Highway Department construction on the Broadway Bridge.

**HISTORY:**

Construction began in 1937 on the Joseph T. Robinson Memorial Auditorium and opened in December of 1939 as an iconic structure in Little Rock. The building is an excellent example of Art Deco style architecture. The City of Little Rock financed the development of the building through an approved city bond issue and with the assistance of a \$387,000 grant from the Public Works Administration; the entire project totaled \$860,000.

The facility features a 2,609-seat proscenium theater with one balcony, and a 15,000 square foot exhibition hall on the lower level. In 1971, an addition was constructed on the east side of the center physically linking the facility to the adjacent Doubletree Hotel and providing improved vertical circulation with the addition of escalators and elevators. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. The facility is owned by the City of Little Rock and managed by the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**Notable Events / Performances:**

- The building has hosted a variety of events including top line Broadway productions, the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, concerts, conventions, and meetings. Over the past 73 years, entertainment icons such as Mickey Rooney, Bill Cosby, Liza Minnelli, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Itzhak Perlman and Jerry Seinfeld, have performed in Robinson.
- The first recorded performance of Elvis Presley’s “Hound Dog” took place on May 16, 1956 in the Robinson Center and was recorded live on KIRA radio and aired throughout Central Arkansas.

For more information please visit [www.littlerock.com](http://www.littlerock.com) or call (501) 376-4781

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