

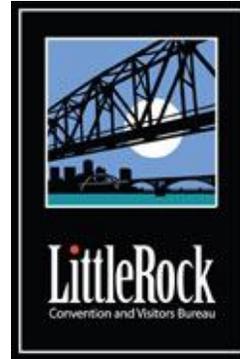
## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LRCVB ANNOUNCES REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) TO RENOVATE ROBINSON CENTER AND MUSIC HALL**

The Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau (LRCVB) today announced the release of a Request for Qualifications for architectural services to renovate Robinson Center and Robinson Center Music Hall. The Request for Qualifications asks architectural design firms, together with appropriate consultants to submit plans that include evaluations of the existing facility, graphic presentation and design development, conceptual solutions and estimate of cost for construction, and a schedule of the proposed additions and renovations. Plans for the facility must also include designs to renovate Robinson Center in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

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.

Over the past months, the LRCVB worked with a team of architects, engineers, theatrical and acoustical consultants, and construction management consultants to conduct preliminary evaluations of the existing facilities, develop a preliminary building program and concept for the anticipated additions and renovations and create a preliminary estimate of the probable construction cost. The concept team consulted with the resident companies that utilize Robinson Center (Celebrity Attractions, the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and the Doubletree Hotel) to determine their program requirements, expectations and goals. The selected architect and consultants will be expected to continue to work with LRCVB and all stakeholders throughout the design and construction process to assure that the project goals are met.

"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 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. Responses, in accordance with the specifications and scope of work with the Request for Qualifications, will be accepted until 2 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 2, 2012.

**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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