

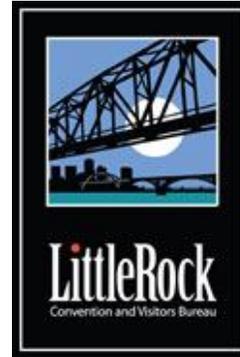
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LRCVB EXPLORES RENOVATION PLANS FOR ROBINSON CENTER

Robinson Center has long been a landmark in Central Arkansas, although the 1939 structure has many deficiencies, including loading/unloading, stage size, acoustical insufficiency, dressing room access and stage storage within the Music Hall, as well as structural, mechanical and electrical issues, public circulation and outdated conference center space. Knowing the center is in need of major upgrades if the facility is to continue to serve Central Arkansas into the future, the Little Rock Advertising and Promotion Commission (LRA&P) empanelled a Robinson Center Concept Team back in October of 2011. The group was tasked with evaluating all aspects of the existing facility, research user needs, propose conceptual solutions and estimate the cost and construction schedule of the proposed additions and renovations.

The concept team was lead by Mike Steelman of SCM Architects, PLLC and also included representatives from WD&D Architects; Shuler Shook Theatre Planners; Jaffe-Holden Acoustical Consultants; TME Inc. Mechanical and Electrical Engineers; ECI Inc. Structural Engineers; McClelland Consulting Engineers Inc. Civil Engineers; East Harding Construction; HVS Consulting and Hunt Construction Group. In addition, stakeholder and tenant organizations representing the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Celebrity Attractions of Tulsa, Oklahoma and the Double Tree Hotel also participated in the planning.

The LRA&P met Tuesday, June 5 for a presentation of findings and programming for future Robinson Center renovations.

Mike Steelman, Principal of SCM Architects of Little Rock, led the presentation, which depicted major interior architectural changes including radical upgrades and amenities within the Music Hall including additional lobby space, acoustical improvements, theatrical stage upgrades, loading dock expansion, a larger stage area, and new dressing room facilities. In addition, an enhanced and modern ballroom was unveiled, along with upgraded

meeting room and banquet spaces. New technology, mechanical systems, outdoor plaza spaces and a modern office complex were also included in the presentation.

Following the final report presented at today's meeting; LRCVB will begin exploring all possible financing options as well as develop an RFQ for the selection of a design team and general contractor/construction management team. Depending on the final outcome, and scheduling, of the adjacent Broadway Bridge project, the Robinson Center renovation is tentatively anticipated to take place from summer 2014 through fall 2016.

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 sports, concerts, conventions, meetings, etc. with big names including Micky Rooney, Bill Cosby, Liza Mineli, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Itzak Perlman to name a few.
- The 1st recorded performance of Elvis'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.

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