



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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7th Street Theatre Association Receives Excellence in Downtown Revitalization Award

OLYMPIA — Hoquiam’s 7th Street Theatre Association was recognized for “Outstanding Achievement in Design” at the 24th Annual Downtown Revitalization Training Institute awards banquet last night in Port Townsend, Wash. The Association was recognized for restoration of the 7th Street Theatre and was among seven projects honored.

“These award winners represent the hard work taking place across the state to strengthen our downtown communities,” said Rogers Weed, director of the Department of Commerce. “I congratulate them on their dedication and commitment to creating vibrant communities and growing Washington’s economy.”

“Restoration of the theatre has had an enormous impact on our community. It now serves as a showpiece and focal point for downtown,” said Alissa Thurman with the City of Hoquiam.

After nearly two decades and an investment of approximately two million dollars from a variety of public and private sources, Hoquiam’s Atmospheric Theatre has been restored to its original grandeur.

The theatre was called “Hoquiam’s Theatre Beautiful” when it was built in 1928. However, from the late 1950’s through mid 1970’s the theatre’s real beauty lay hidden except for an occasional special event. Time took its toll and the theatre began to deteriorate. Over the years several different attempts were made to purchase the building and revive it. None were successful, that is, until 1986 when a local businessman donated \$103,000 to the cause. A non-profit was formed and the new group set out to bring the theatre back to its original splendor.

In the past 20 years, numerous projects were completed including tenant space remodeling, HVAC and electrical upgrades, roof replacement, sealing and painting three of the exterior walls, window replacement, and installation of a state-of-the-art sound system. As momentum grew, four large and looming projects remained: restoration of the 997 seats, replacement of the original stage rigging and carpeting, and restoration of the auditorium ceiling.

In 2008, the year of the theatre's 80th birthday, the Theatre Association decided to move forward with all four projects. They tackled each with the goal of preserving as much of the integrity of the structure as possible. Instead of replacing the theatre seats with new modern seating, the originals were sent to McNeil Island Prison for restoration. Thirty state prisoners repaired, sanded, and stained the wood to match the original color. They also reupholstered the cushions to match the original red velour.

An architectural arts firm was hired to complete the auditorium restoration. Instead of removing and replacing all of the plaster from the atmospheric ceiling (which comes complete with twinkling stars) only the plaster that needed to be repaired was replaced.

Attention to detail was carried out throughout the theatre. From the restored seats to curtain replacement on the stage, everything was matched to replicate the original as closely as possible. The result is truly stunning and can once again be called "Hoquiam's Theatre Beautiful".

The Downtown Revitalization Training Institute and the "Excellence in Downtown Revitalization" awards are organized by the Department of Commerce. Commerce is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. For more information, visit www.commerce.wa.gov.

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