

RUTH ECKERD HALL

RICHARD B. BAUMGARDNER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

PRESS RELEASE

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THE CITY OF CLEARWATER AND RUTH ECKERD HALL EMBARK ON HISTORIC CAPITOL THEATRE PROJECT

January 5, 2009, Clearwater, FL – The City of Clearwater and Ruth Eckerd Hall have joined forces to renovate and revitalize the historic Capitol Theatre located on downtown Clearwater's beautiful Cleveland Street. This project is part of the plan to re-energize downtown Clearwater, and the theatre is an integral part of the unique character of the area.

"Clearwater is committed to making investments in downtown that set the stage for revitalization and redevelopment. This one, quite literally, does that. We see this as an anchor for our redevelopment efforts, and are proud to have a partner like Ruth Eckerd Hall to help ensure its success," said Clearwater Mayor Frank V. Hibbard.

"While Ruth Eckerd Hall is in the planning stages of a campaign to raise funds to restore the theater, interim renovations to the Capitol Theatre will begin immediately," said Ruth Eckerd Hall President and CEO Robert Freedman. "A few events will be scheduled in upcoming months, in order to give the public a glimpse inside this historic theatre before it is closed for major renovations, which are expected to take, once begun, approximately 12 months. The theatre will then re-open in grand style."

Plans also include renovation of the adjacent Lokey building, which will eventually be converted into a grand lobby, concession areas, and restrooms for the theatre. When completed, the 655-seat Capitol will become a venue at which Ruth Eckerd Hall will present all genres of live entertainment, including jazz, classical artists, pop music acts, dance and other diverse national, regional and local acts. A film series is also anticipated.

Ruth Eckerd Hall is encouraging the submission of old newspaper articles, photos or specific memories of the Capitol Theatre's past, particularly any descriptions of the interior of the theater. Individuals can go to the Ruth Eckerd Hall website (www.rutheckerdhall.com) and click on the youtube icon to see a photo tour depicting photos of the Capitol Theater and downtown Clearwater. There will also be a place to share Capitol Theater memories and stories. Information can also be sent by mail to:

Ruth Eckerd Hall
Marketing Department
1111 McMullen Booth Road
Clearwater, FL 33759

Please do not send original articles or photos, as they cannot be returned.

Constructed and established in 1921 as the Capitol Theatre (later renamed the Royalty Theatre), this classic structure, complete with a large mezzanine and furnishings reminiscent of a classic Hollywood theater, is one of the oldest operating theatres in the state of Florida.

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The stately, elegant design echoes a more refined era of Florida's past, when style and manner reigned supreme. The theatre has seen a time when gentlemen wore top hats and ladies carried parasols. In its hey-day, the walls of this famed theatre housed many of the best entertainers in the world.

The Capitol Theatre reportedly had its beginnings as a vaudeville theater and movie house, and was once the home of famous headliners who displayed their legendary talents (making history in the process) on the polished wood planks of the Capitol's stage.

To stay abreast of the progress of the Capitol Theatre renovation, and for information on upcoming events, sign up to receive the Ruth Eckerd Hall newsletter at www.rutheckerdhall.com.

Designed by the prestigious Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Ruth Eckerd Hall enters its 26th season as the number six ranked venue in the world, according to the entertainment industry trade publication Billboard Magazine.

*Entertainment industry trade publication Pollstar announced the nomination of Ruth Eckerd Hall for a **2008 Pollstar Concert Industry Award** in the category of **Theatre of the Year**.*

Known for its 2,180-seat acoustically perfect auditorium, artists from America and around the world, ranging from classical, rock, opera, Broadway, Jazz, pop and more are included in the stellar lineup of more than 200 performances a year.

Ruth Eckerd Hall and the Ruth Eckerd Hall Foundation are 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.

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