



A Case for Restoring The Ritz

Preserve History Develop Downtown Foster the Arts and Watch our City Thrive

Corpus Christi PATCH, Positive Action Towards Cultural Heritage, is committed to promoting arts and culture in Corpus Christi, Texas. Our mission is to develop, foster, and promote the arts as valuable experiences central to the vitality of the community by restoring and developing The Ritz Theatre into a state-of-the-art entertainment and education venue of the highest quality.

The Ritz Theatre, built in 1929 and seating 1200, once inspired a world of imagination and creativity for the Coastal Bend. Today it stands as one of the few remaining historic buildings in Corpus Christi. By coming together to restore The Ritz, our community will be able to enjoy year-round programming in a place that will help grow the arts, revive downtown, uplift our history and serve as an economic driver for our city.

Please consider every avenue available to invest in The Ritz restoration and help Corpus Christi thrive!



The Ritz Importance

US: Presidents & actors attended movie premiers, Ritz was early adopter of hi-tech innovations like talking movies, air conditioning, 3-D film, new programming includes national broadcast show.

State: 11th largest theatre in state when built, known in 70's as being a breeding ground for some of the best musicians in the state, will be major feature of the Texas Music Trail, other cities offering help and creating connections.

City: Beacon of entertainment at entrance to city, connects two separate areas and supports businesses, provides source of income for the city, art & culture support system, city icon.

A HISTORY OF THE RITZ

1929 1930 1940 1950 1974 1976 1980 1989

Bruce Collins has Ritz built by architect Scott Dunne

One of the first air-conditioned buildings in Corpus Christi

Stock Market crashes - start of the Great Depression

Opening day on Christmas "It's a Great Life" starring the Duncan Sisters for \$.39

Hughes Franklin (Howard Hughes) owns Ritz

Theatre manager is E.H. Rowley who would eventually become part of the famous United Artists Theatres and owner of The Ritz

W.W. Jones suggests additional box office facing Mesquite St. to enhance property

Big name bands entertain military personnel and local community

Elvis plays free after-movie concert with touring show at The Ritz

Theatre forced to strip some embellishments like proscenium to make room for "big-screen" movies

Corpus Christi bans Elvis and rock n' roll due to "rowdy" concert in 1956

The Ritz shows its last regular film screenings

Becomes "The Ritz Music Hall"

Productions from 1974-86 include Willie Nelson, Jimmy Buffett, Bruce Springsteen, Metallica, Def Leppard, Motley Crue and more

Amateur theatre group, The Performing Players, hold shows at The Ritz

The Encore Theatre Corporation occupies Ritz

The Ritz closes its doors



2006 2007 2010 2012 2013 2014 2017 2019

CCPATCH is formed with mission to restore Ritz

Ritz opens for public tours at Art Walk

Ritz holds Ghost Tours

The Ritz hosts The Haunted Ritz Theatre event on Halloween

Theatre donated to CCPATCH from TRT right before Christmas

Ritz is put on Texas' Most Endangered List

2012 *Texas*
Most Endangered List

CCPATCH and Mayor lift ban on Elvis and rock n' roll with celebration at Whataburger Field

Live at The Ritz: the Revival Sessions music series

Clarissa Serna from NBC's The Voice and local Chicas Rock have exclusive performance at The Ritz Theatre

Initiate new programming with Artist Collective, Artist Nurturing Program, and CC Music Office development

Projected TIRZ #3 funding with matching funds

Projected Phase I opening with CofO

Projected completion of full historic restoration

Projected GRAND Re-Opening

The Ritz celebrates 90 Years!



The Ritz Restoration

The theatre can have a significant economic impact by spurring downtown revitalization. When a city spends money on its downtown, it signals to private investors that it's safe for them to do the same, that their investment will be more secure. The arts are an important factor used by many businesses and individuals when deciding to locate to a community. They want to move into a healthy city, and healthy cities have vibrant downtowns that don't fold up after 5 PM.

The Ritz is more than just a theatre. Historic buildings and their architecture are an expression of our city and its values. The act of revitalizing old buildings not only serves as a way to preserve our history by bringing the past into the present, but as a symbol of sustainability. We as a community have an opportunity to do something restorative and regenerative to this building, an act that is truly loving that will add to the value of our city.

PHASE

1

BASIC REHAB

The first priority will be to ensure needed standards are met in order to secure a certificate of occupancy and to place the theatre in service. Rehab includes roof, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, seats, safety, plus additional interior and exterior improvements.

PHASE

2

PROGRAMMING

The restoration only matters if the programming is valuable. The Artist Nurturing Program, Artist Collective and Corpus Christi Music Office will be established as well as income-producing events. Partners include the Governor's office, CVB & Omni.

PHASE

3

FULL RESTORATION

A full-scale restoration back to 1929 glory will be completed. A broadcast show will launch encouraging talent and viewers to travel to our city to be part of the show. Dynamic programs will begin focused on the sustainability of The Ritz and arts in CC.

photo courtesy Main Street America

Reviving The Ritz Theatre will:

- raise property values
- create jobs
- increase business, retail, & options downtown
- inspire and support creativity & the arts
- increase overall revenue for the city



WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE RITZ?

The redevelopment of the Ritz will generate thousands of visits downtown and will improve the lives of countless citizens, enabling more growth in property values, sales taxes, out of town visitors, and quality of life in our downtown core. The Governor's office reported that a city could see an increase in total revenue by a whole percentage point by supporting the music industry nurtured by The Ritz.

We believe that the three-phase method is the best way to preserve this portion of the historic fabric of Corpus Christi and to immediately place a very important venue into service. At the moment, the structure is very restorable and the Phase I work can be accomplished in less than a year.

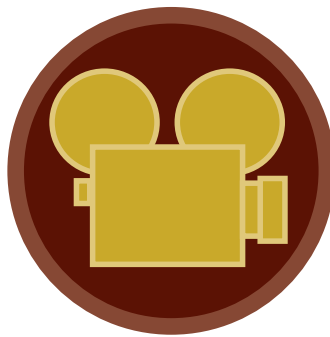
Once Phase 3 is complete, with the support of established programming from Phase 2, The Ritz will host a wide range of entertainment options focused on sustainability for the arts, community and The Ritz.

LIVE MUSIC COMEDY & BROADCASTS



- Host Artist Collective & Artist Nurturing Program events
- Concerts of local and national touring performers
- Music festivals
- Stand-up comedy
- Nationally broadcast variety show

MOVIES FILM FESTIVALS & MOVIE SET



- Work with new and established film festivals
- Show vintage, independent & documentary style movies not shown at the multi-plex
- Work with local and regional film societies to host screenings
- Utilize The Ritz as a movie set

LIVE DRAMA & PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS



- Touring shows (musicals, dramas, dance, etc.)
- Offer intimate community performances
- Offer the venue for weddings, special community events and fundraisers
- Secondary location for the Omni for conferences and conventions

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING & INTERNSHIPS



- Events focused on students and youth
- Work with local schools to host workshops and use of stage
- Offer internships in the various departments of operation
- Partner with other institutions to create theatrical programming

Financial Plans to Restore & Sustain The Ritz

Why City, County, and State Funding is Vital

There is only one Corpus Christi Ritz Theatre and time is running out for this old, but valuable building. Funding The Ritz is actually a low-risk situation. The Ritz has the strongest potential of any downtown project to increase city revenue and provide an anchor business on the bayfront, proven in many similar situations. Government agencies can show buy-in to the project via financial support without adding any burden to taxpayers, yet benefitting all taxpayers. The amount of money we can acquire from the city, county and state will be matched equal to the amount these agencies are willing to invest. Negotiations are ongoing and our other funding sources are asking for government buy-in. A stimulus will result in matching funds and will meet the budget required to complete Phase I and move into Phase 2 and 3. Please consider Phase I as an immediate need to get The Ritz safe, secure, with basic functionality so that we may move into Phase 2 and 3. Phase I can start very quickly with your help.

Tax Credit Financing

The Historic Tax Credit program encourages historic building restoration by providing tax credits to the property owners in order to attract new private capital that in turn generates local, state, and federal property tax revenues, enhances property values, creates jobs, and revitalizes communities.

We have three chances at receiving State, Federal, and New Market programs. Tax credits are monetized by bringing in investors. The Community Development Entities who select the projects eligible for this process will not commit tax credits without balance of funding. Therefore, we need to come up with 40% of the total restoration cost through other funding sources, and the tax credits will cover the remaining 60%.

- **Tax credit financing represents 60+% of our needed funds**
- **Three chances for financing with State, Federal and New Market Programs**
- **Gives donors confidence that The Ritz has a chance for success**
- **Gives The Ritz access to more major dollars**

“This universally has value to the community. If you look at El Paso downtown 5 years [before restoration] vs what it is today, in terms of all the residual, it started with this theatre. El Paso had an inferiority complex, like nothing great can happen here... If you can look at what you have that's unique and highlight that, then you have something. So if Corpus Christi has a theatre that is unique in all the world... if you can teach the people in your community to appreciate it, then you have made something that people will come to see. Because we can get this or that chain store. All that does is homogenize us. It's the celebration of our differences, which is what this facility, and I hope the one in Corpus Christi will be about.”

- **Eric Pearson** President, El Paso Community Foundation
interview with CallerTimes about The Plaza Theatre and The Ritz
<https://youtu.be/KXhHa3Wpye4>

Phase I - Repair and Rehab

First:

- **Work with architects and consultants and obtain feasibility study, update business plan and get renderings for phases I and 2**
- **Start historic designation process**
- **Generate funding and historic tax credit financing matching \$300,000 from City**

Exterior:

- **Roof: Roof to be repaired to extend life of current installation**
- **Signage: “Ritz” sign to be restored/replaced (Del Mar currently working on donating this)**
- **Side wall mural to be commissioned and executed**
- **Front exterior to be restored/replace/painted**

Interior:

- **HVAC to be replaced**
- **Fire Safety provisions as required by code**
- **Seats to be cleaned and reupholstered**
- **Plumbing to be replaced and restrooms restored to code/compliant functionality**
- **Electrical/lighting to be completed and replaced as needed**
- **Lobby to be rehabilitated to serve refreshments /tickets etc.**

Phase 2 - Programming

Initially the theatre programming as a music venue will generate the cash flow needed to cover operations expenses. Later CC PATCH intends to add additional programming guided by a programming director and additional staff.

Artist Nurturing Program, Artist Collective, Music Office & Texas Music Trail

The Corpus Christi CVB, Governor’s office, Todd Hunter, CC PATCH and Latin Grammy nominated artist Dusty Oliviera, along with many other stakeholders are currently working on creating a Corpus Christi Music Office. As part of this endeavor, CC PATCH is implementing an Artist Nurturing Program to help subsidize costs to develop local professional artists. Along these same lines, CC PATCH has created an Artist Collective, bringing smaller organizations under one non-profit umbrella to pool our resources for a better chance of success. The first two groups under the Artist Collective are CC Songwriters and Chica’s Rock.

Broadcast Show

CC PATCH is currently negotiating with the Corpus Christi CVB and KEDT Public Broadcasting to develop a nationally broadcast show to attract visitors to The Ritz, and more importantly, to create a reason for people outside of our community to become interested in what Corpus Christi has to offer.

Phase 3 - Full Historic Restoration

CCPATCH has a team of professionals ready to carry out a successful historic restoration for The Ritz back to what it looked like in 1929, keeping in line with historic designation requirements while adding state-of-the-art functionality. This \$12 million phase is HUGE and will require an executive director, staff and full team of support. Listed here are just a few of the people and groups we have committed to help our cause. For budgets and details, see additional docs.

Building Development Partners

- Kyra Shook – Building Development, Planning and Bidding
- Del Mar College - Architecture & Drafting
- Scott Electric – Electrical
- Omni Hotel Team – Electrical/HVAC/Plumbing
- Omni providing parking
- Citgo (pending)

Programming Partners

- Governor's Texas Music Office/Austin Music Office
- Todd Hunter/Texas Music Trail
- Main Street America (Governor's Wife, Cecilia Abbott)
- Dusty Oliviera, Produce
- Cecy Treviño, Chica's Rock
- Jimmy Willden, CC Songwriters
- Casey Lain, House of Rock
- KSpace
- Ensemble Group, Digital Marketing, Design & Development
- Marina Arts District/DMD/Merchant's Association
- CVB
- United Chamber (pending)
- KEDT (pending)

Festivals & Features

- ArtWalk
- Dia de los Muertos/Citgo's Altars of Remembrance
- Hot Tamale Festival
- Hot Rods for The Ritz Car Show
- Ritz Food Truck Park
- Ritz Revival Sessions
- CC7Day Film Festival (pending)

Pros, Advisors and Consultants*

- Theatre Historical Society/Texas Historical Commission/National Register/Preservation Texas
- Leslie Hitt, Ryan Sanders Baseball, Electrical
- Chris Hamilton, KJM Commercial, Building
- Dr. Clifford Edge, Historic Theatre Advisor
- LHAT, The League of Historic American Theatres – membership with council of theatre restoration consultants and professionals www.lhat.org
- Killis Almond Architects, Theatre Restoration Architect www.killisalmondarchitects.com
- The North Group, Theatre Planning & Fundraising Consultants www.northgroup.biz
- Janis A. Barlow & Associates, Feasibility Studies, Project Coordination, Theatre Rehabilitation Consultants
- EverGreene Architectural Arts - Detail Restoration

** No formal contracts are in place at this time. Those will be executed once funding is secured. Please see business plan for scope of phase 3.*



ECONOMIC IMPACT of Historic Theatres

A single historic theatre in a medium-size* city has the potential to...

**Population 250-500K
Courtesy the League of
Historic American Theatres
www.lhat.org*

- **Sustain more than 177 full-time equivalent jobs**
- **Create more than \$5.4 million in total expenditures**
- **Generate more than \$555,000 in revenue for local governments**
- **Add more than \$4.2 million to household incomes in the community**

The Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox

— Spokane, WA

In a city where visitors spend around \$870,000 million annually (Corpus Christi visitors spend about \$1 billion annually), the restoration of this theater made a serious impact on the dynamics of the city and downtown area. Restored in 2007, the Martin Woldson Theater now displays a beautiful art mural wall and ceiling, adding vibrant ambiance to a downtown that the theatre is helping regenerate.

The Martin Woldson Theater showcases local, regional, and national culture, educational and entertainment events, and serves as the permanent home for the Spokane Symphony.

photo courtesy spokanearts.org

- **Acted as an economic catalyst: \$57 million into local economy through construction and 1st year of operation (175 new construction jobs for 18 months)**
- **Consistently generate \$16 million of economic impact annually**
- **Directly related to \$3.2 billion of outside investment into city's urban core**
- **Revitalized an entire city block, one of the lowest income census tracts in Washington state, by attracting 170,000 visitors annually**
- **Added a new dimension of cultural experience to downtown**
- **Prominent anchor of emerging art district**



The Plaza Theatre

—El Paso, TX

Sister-theatre to The Ritz, The Plaza was built in the same Spanish Renaissance style, by the same architect, one year after The Ritz, in El Paso, Texas. The Plaza also shares a similar history as The Ritz: it was built, prospered, the times changed, and it ceased to be used. However, the Plaza is now more than one step ahead of The Ritz. Restoring the theatre from 2004-2006 proved to not only be a success for the theatre, but for the city of El Paso and its downtown.

In the beginning, El Paso's downtown was not in good shape, the project needed tons of money, and 28% of the city lived below the poverty line. **An economic impact study that predicted \$110 million of impact over 10 years convinced them to move forward.** Now, the city of El Paso looks back at the restoration of the Plaza as a cultural investment- vital to the city's character and the spark for other investments. The vibrant fabric of the community is what makes El Paso's culture attractive to tourists and enlists pride with residents.

- **Number of Events (2014/15 fy) – 114**
- **Overall Attendance – 96,572**
- **Days of Activity – 120**
- **Non-Profit Days of Activity – 80**
- **Gross Revenue – \$1,031,961**

The Plaza Theatre is The Ritz's “sister theatre” and has seen amazing impact since it's 2006 restoration:

- **2015 Ticket Sales = 76,646**
- **#84 in Pollstar's Top World Theatres 2015**

Impact of Film Festival:

- **Plaza Classic Film Festival launched with 25,000 people who watched more than 60 movies. Now, audiences average around 40,000/year.**
- **The Festival has an economic impact of \$1.5 million annually. About 15% of its audience comes from outside of the 45-mile El Paso/Juarez/Las Cruces radius, a third of them from the Austin area.**
- **The Festival draws major celebrity guests — Al Pacino, Debbie Reynolds, Rita Moreno, etc.**

Impact of Hit Shows:

- **Wicked: 12-day run, 9 sell-outs, 92% capacity**
- **Economic impact of the 5,100 out-of-town ticket buyers over 12 days was \$1.8 million.**
- **Another \$600,000 was spent locally on marketing and production by theater/tour officials, as well as hotel rooms and dining by members of the 75-member cast and crew.**
- **100 local musicians/crew were hired for the show**
- **Restaurants reported a 66% increase in sales during the show's run**

Photo courtesy elpasolive.com



The Fox Tucson Theatre

—Tucson, AZ

Fox Theatre brings \$3.4 million in direct spending to downtown Tucson in a year. Of this, nearly half is spent at businesses other than the Fox. The biggest beneficiaries are restaurant and bar establishments, where Fox patrons spend \$1.2 million annually while downtown for Fox events.

In a year, Fox patrons downtown for events at Fox Theatre spend more than \$100,000 at downtown retail stores; \$86,000 at other downtown arts, entertainment, and recreation places; \$73,000 at other downtown service establishments; and \$61,000 at downtown lodging establishments. This is in addition to nearly \$1.2 million for tickets, \$173,000 for concessions, and \$467,000 for merchandise and other expenditures at the Fox.

Fox Theatre brings more than 61,000 visitors a year to downtown Tucson. (This counts individual visits, not individual people who make multiple visits.)

More than 95% of Fox Theatre patrons reside outside downtown Tucson and 77% live more than 5 miles away. More than half live outside the City of Tucson. Nearly 10% of patrons travel to Fox Theatre from outside Pima County.

Nearly 85% of Fox Theatre patrons would visit downtown Tucson less frequently if not for the Fox. More than 35% would visit much less frequently or not at all (more than 7% would not go downtown at all if not for Fox Theatre).

TOTAL ANNUAL DIRECT SPENDING BY FOX THEATRE PATRONS

- **At Fox Theatre \$1.8 million**
- **At Other Downtown Tucson Businesses \$1.5 million**
- **Restaurants and bars \$1.2 million**
- **Hotels/motels \$61,000**
- **Retail stores \$101,000**
- **Other arts, entertainment, and recreation places \$86,000**
- **Other services \$73,000**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT/YR = \$3.4 million

Photo courtesy foxtucson.com



Tampa Theatre

Tampa, FL

Though Tampa, Florida has a population size a little larger than Corpus Christi and sees at least 13 million visitors each year, the successful restoration and operation of the Tampa Theatre can teach us a thing or two.



Photo courtesy www.tbo.com

- **Theatre was set to be demolished**
- **Tampa citizens rallied against demolition**
- **Committees and community leaders worked for 5 years to save the theater**
- **The city of Tampa successfully got ownership and saved and restored the theatre**
- **Post restoration: welcomed 5 million visitors to downtown annually (30,000 - 1 million students in field trips and summer camps)**
- **Average of 625 events per year: 550 film screenings, 36 backstage tours, 25 school trips, 12 free/open-to-the-community events, 10 concerts, 6 corporate events**

The Grand Opera House

Galveston, TX

This theatre has an amazing connection to its community. After surviving the hurricanes of 1900, 1915, 1977, and 1983, the theater was in dire need of help after the hurricane of 2008. Thousands of residents raised \$8 million for a previous restoration, but they did not hesitate to do it again after hurricane Ike. The Grand has a remarkable restoration story and is a great testament to the power of community involvement.



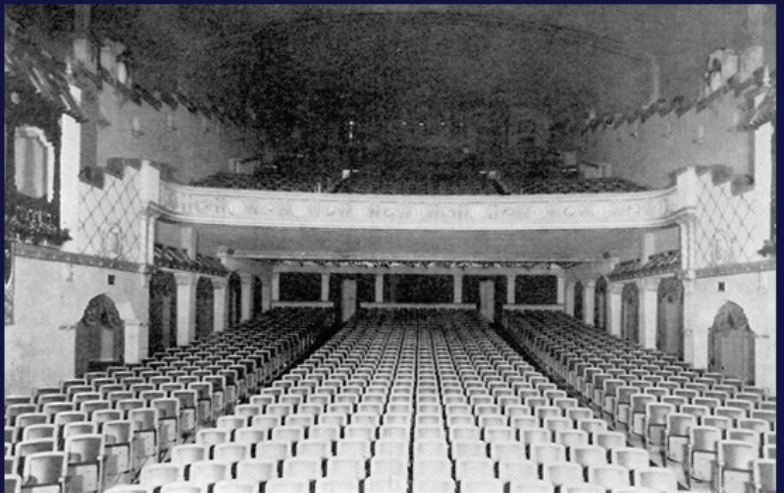
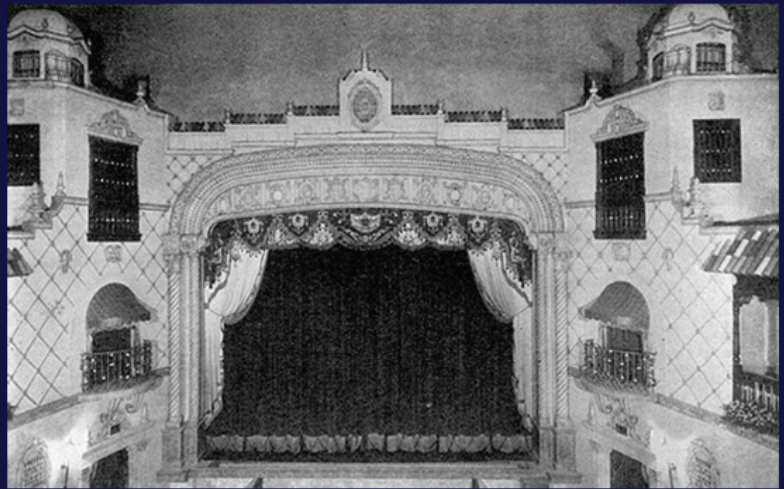
- **Theatre severely damaged by hurricane Ike- September 13, 2008**
- **Individuals, businesses, and community leaders jumped to help The Grand recover losses**
- **People offered time, money, and even a new piano to restore the theatre**
- **Local media amplified the need for help to a wide audience**
- **Grand Re-Opening occurred on January 4, 2009**
- **Ranked #3 of 47 attractions on TripAdvisor.com for Galveston**

Photo courtesy killisalmondarchitects.com

WILL YOU STEP UP FOR THE RITZ?

“The only way downtown is going to change is if everybody takes a moment to invest a little time and money in the projects happening downtown. That’s what it’s going to take, is people saying ‘Yes, I’m committed to helping. I see the power The Ritz could have for Corpus Christi - for bringing talent and wonderful entertainment here. So I’m going to show up and stop talking about it and take action and do the work.’ That is when we’ll really notice things happening.”

- **Monica Sawyer** President, CC PATCH
interview with CallerTimes about The Ritz
<https://youtu.be/rRLP4RbjNOg>



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THE RITZ THEATRE

Corpus Christi, Texas - Circa 1930
Photo courtesy AEP Texas