

(DeKalb) March 1 Declared “Egyptian Theatre Day” in DeKalb

Saturday, March 1, 2008 is being declared “Preservation of the Egyptian Theatre Day” in the City of DeKalb to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of P.E.T.

In 1977 it became necessary for the Egyptian Theatre to close its doors, under its last commercial owner, in a state of neglect and disrepair. Former Mayor Judy King called a meeting at City Hall on March 1, 1978, to explore the possibilities of community support of saving the Egyptian Theatre. A group of 35 persons who met that night paved the way for the formation of the non-profit organization now known as Preservation of the Egyptian Theatre (P.E.T.).

P.E.T. took control of the Egyptian Theatre in 1978 and in 1982 was able to complete a \$2.125 million renovation of the theatre. When the theatre opened again in 1983 it was host to dozens of events a year. The diversity of events was impressive with multiple community groups and national groups calling the Egyptian Theatre “home”.

For many years after the renovation the Egyptian Theatre had one goal; to keep the doors open. With this small goal the theatre was able to sustain itself off of rental revenue for many years. However in the late 90’s it became increasingly difficult to do this with costs rising above income for the first time. Operational costs began to climb with soaring utility costs leading this increase.

Many changes in recent years have allowed the theatre to operate in the black once again and begin to grow. Some of those changes include a restructuring within the organization, an increase in community involvement, the return of the classic films, and an increase in programming. But most of all P.E.T. started reaching out to the community again and asking for the community’s support.

“The Egyptian Theatre does not only belong to P.E.T., it belongs to the community,” states current Egyptian Theatre Operations Director Alex Nerad.

Nerad continued by stating that “the continued survival and growth of the Egyptian Theatre is the responsibility of all of us in the community. The DeKalb community knew the importance of saving the theatre in 1978 and now 30 years later the Egyptian still stands; stronger and prouder than ever before because of this community.”

The Egyptian Theatre is open for nearly 42 weeks out of the year. There is no programming in the summer because the theatre has never had air conditioning since it opened in 1929. During the 42 weeks that the theatre is open there are over 75 different events that take place at the theatre. There are more than 25 different community organizations that use the theatre every year.

While the theatre continues to be active, P.E.T. still needs the support of the community through their time volunteering and through their financial donations.

In recognition of P.E.T.'s 30th Anniversary in the City of DeKalb, the mayor is calling all citizens to recognize the contributions of the many dedicated volunteers for their efforts over the years to preserve this entertainment center that has become the crown jewel of the City of DeKalb.

Furthermore the Mayor is calling upon citizens to continue enjoying and supporting this unique and historical facility in order to preserve it for future generations.

There will be a brief press conference on Saturday, March 1 at 11:00am at the Egyptian Theatre where Mayor Frank Van Buer will read the "Preservation of Egyptian Theatre Day" proclamation; all are welcome.

Saturday, March 1 will also host the theatre's classic movie day for March. "Wizard of Oz" will be shown at 12pm and 3pm; General Admission tickets are only \$3.00. "Breakfast at Tiffany's" will be shown at 6pm and 9pm; General Admission tickets are only \$5.00. Tickets are available at the door. Seating begins 30 minutes prior to each movie.

The Egyptian Theatre is located at 135 N. 2nd Street, Downtown DeKalb, IL. For more information visit www.egyptiantheatre.org or call (815) 758-1215.