

REBIRTH OF THE LIBERTY

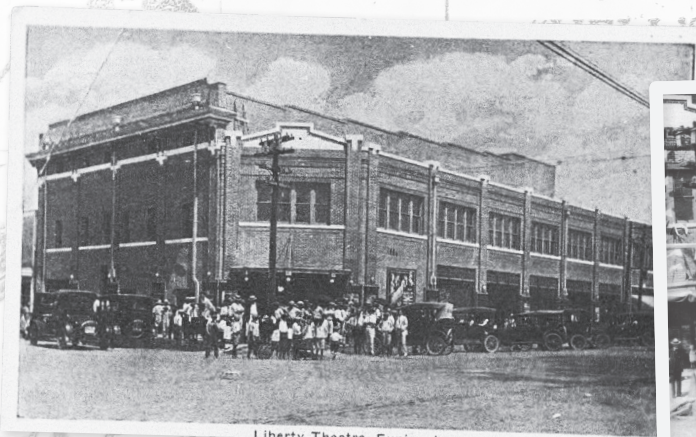
Est. 1924 Eunice, La.

From its grand opening in 1924 through the better part of a century, the Liberty Theatre in Eunice served as a cultural hub for Southwest Louisiana and beyond. As the largest and grandest “movie palace” in the region, the Liberty drew steady crowds by hosting an all-star array of performers, movies and celebrities. Beginning in the 1920s with silent films and continuing through the rise of widescreen Technicolor cinema, thousands of visitors flocked to the Liberty to see the latest Hollywood films, popular performers, dance contests and even politicians.

In the 1980s, the rise of multiplex cinemas and in-home video rental led to the shuttering of many of the grand old theatres, including the Liberty. Local efforts later that

decade led to renovations and the theatre reopened for live performances, including the widely acclaimed broadcast of the *Rendezvous des Cajuns* radio and television program. This revival placed Eunice at the forefront of Cajun music and culture for many years, attracting audiences from around the globe.

In 2020, HVAC problems and the COVID-19 pandemic led the Liberty to temporarily close its doors once more. During this time, a new group of stakeholders and supporters have assembled a plan to restore the Theatre to its former glory, bringing it back to prominence as a cultural hub and architectural showpiece that will bring activity and visitors back to downtown Eunice.



Liberty Theatre, Eunice, La.



Open 3 p. m. 5-20c

“The
Ben Turpin
An extra good show for the

“Scars of Jealousy”

OF THE
FIELD

23rd

RESTORING A CULTURAL TREASURE

The Plan to Bring Back the Liberty

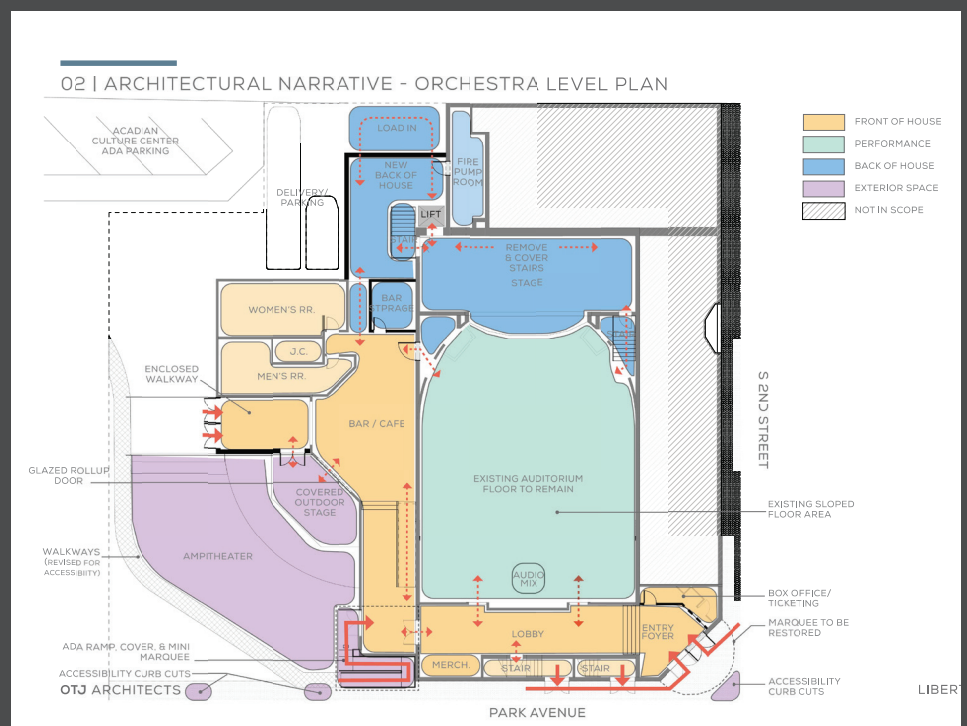


The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice is made up of community leaders dedicated to restoring the Liberty Theatre as a cultural hub to showcase the best local and regional talent. The Liberty will also provide a venue for performers from across the country and world to bring their talents to local audiences.

A community treasure, the Liberty is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of only three theatres in Louisiana included in the National Trust Guide to Great American Movie Houses. Project planners are dedicated to preserving the historic architectural features and design of the theatre while also incorporating modern amenities and increased functionality. The association has completed a strategic planning process to ensure that the Liberty has a solid foundation for the future, including proper governance, financial support, diverse programming, effective marketing and branding that ensure the Liberty's long-term viability.

A feasibility study conducted by OTJ Architects in 2022 (source of the architectural diagram at right) provides an in-depth preliminary assessment of current needs and conditions of the historic Liberty structure. The study also proposes a series of renovations to the site to support the vision of creating an experiential destination known locally, regionally, and worldwide for celebrating Louisiana's dynamic heritage and being a crossroads for the cultural roots of humankind.

The feasibility study is available at eunice.libertycenter.org



Through an in-depth strategic planning process in 2021, in conversation with key stakeholders and with input from various experts, the Association identified a series of key actions needed over the next five years and beyond. This list comprises 16 major initiatives across six primary areas of focus.

FACILITY RENOVATION

While preserving the Liberty’s historic design and architecture, the building will receive important updates and modernizations to improve amenities and functionality. These improvements may include:

- Enhancements to the auditorium, and updated sound and lighting systems
- The addition of bar/café (as indicated on diagram)
- Additional stages and spaces for cultural programming
- Improved accommodations for performers
- Renovations related to infrastructure, such as HVAC, electrical, and mechanical
- Improved ADA access

ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE

The Association will establish formal structures and practices to create an effective governing board and key operational staff, providing the Liberty with stable, effective leadership.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In order to build a solid financial foundation for the Liberty, the Association will invest in the creation of an infrastructure for giving as well as a detailed plan for future fundraising efforts.

- Financial and fundraising infrastructure
- A campaign for the future
- Post-reopening giving structure
- Grants and public investment

BRANDING & MARKETING

The Liberty Theatre, rebranded as the Liberty Center, needs effective, targeted marketing support to thrive and attract visitors. A marketing plan will be developed to promote programming as well as fundraising campaign efforts.

PROGRAMMING

Events and programs at the reopened Liberty Center will include cultural performances and events, interactive heritage offerings, digital programming and rental products.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

In addition, its role as one of the leading voices for the community’s arts and cultural resources, the Liberty will seek to establish a Cultural Advisory Committee. This group, composed of Acadiana-area musicians, artists and other cultural figures, will advise the Liberty on programming and policies.

The Liberty Returns in 2024 – exactly 100 years after its doors originally opened.

THE BUDGET FOR REBIRTH

Capital Improvements

Demolition & removals	100,000	Electrical & signage	900,000
Concrete & foundations	100,000	Refurbish seats & furnishings	715,000
Engineering & specialties	100,000	Stage lights, sound, controls	250,000
Carpentry & finish work	300,000	Architectural services	625,000
Interior finishes, doors	550,000	Project administration	250,000
Backstage addition	325,000	Insurance, bonds & permits	200,000
HVAC & thermal insulation	900,000	Contingency (15% of above)	835,000
Plumbing & fire suppression	250,000		

Total Capital Expenditure \$6,400,000

Opening & Initial Operations

Opening events & marketing	120,000
Operating years 1-3	330,000
Post-opening improvements	50,000

Total Opening \$500,000

Operating Endowment \$1,500,000

Total Requirement \$8,400,000



The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice was established in 2020 to lead the planning, renovation, program development and reopening of the Theatre as a cultural community asset to serve all of Louisiana.

Following the planned reopening of the Liberty in 2024, the Association will maintain high-quality programming that showcases the unique culture of South Louisiana. The Liberty will also offer multi-use opportunities for the property on an ongoing basis (e.g. receptions, conventions, civic functions, private functions and concerts). In addition to its cultural significance, the Liberty will serve as a catalyst for further growth and economic development in the area.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "historic theaters are proven community revitalizers and economic drivers. Not only do they generate an impact of at least \$2-\$3 per dollar spent on tickets, but they also catalyze other business development, create jobs, and improve the local quality of life."

PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Board of The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice:

Joel Savoy (President), Pat Dossman, Paul Feavel, Herman Fuselier, Celeste Gomez, Laura Pitre, Charles Seale

Advisors: Dwight Jodon, Mayor Curtis Joubert (deceased), The Cajun French Music Association

Partners: City of Eunice (Mayor Scott Fontenot), US National Park Service (Superintendent Charles E. Hunt, Jean Lafitte National Park)

The Association for the Liberty Theatre of Eunice is a Louisiana not-for-profit organization recognized by the US Internal Revenue Service under chapter 501(c)3. Donations to the Association may be tax-deductible to the amount allowed by law.



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE LIBERTY THEATRE OF EUNICE

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN OUR PLANNING EFFORTS

