Restoration Costs & Needs

Grand Opera House of the South’s restoration project is an exciting yet massive undertaking. Complete restoration and renovation will cost an estimated $3.1 million. This goal will be reached through the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations. Additional funding will be procured through fundraising activities, an aggressive capital campaign, and in-kind donations of goods and services.

The State of Louisiana has allotted Grand Opera House of the South $1.15 million in its Capital Budget. This amount, which will be distributed in increments of $235,000 over a period of 5 years, must have matching funds, which has been successfully met. Representative Gil Pinckard, former Louisiana Senator Fred Loyd, and lobbyists Charlie Smith were solely responsible for getting this funding passed the Louisiana Legislature.

In addition, former Congressman Chris John and former United States Senator John Breaux secured $148,000 through the federal government’s Save America’s Treasures program to aid in the restoration and renovation of Grand Opera House of the South.

Programming

Programing at Grand Opera House of the South will encompass four main live performances, educational programming, community events, and ballroom activities.

Live Performances

The performance stage of Grand Opera House of the South is 43 feet by 39 feet. Once restored, the stage will have state of the art lighting, rigging and sound systems as well as dressing rooms for at least 50 performers. The original trap door will remain a permanent fixture of the opera stage for the need of quick scene changes. Dance, theatre, magicians, and other performers will grace the stage as other genres of performing arts.

Educational Programming

With seating capacity near 350, Grand Opera House of the South will be the perfect venue for educational programming for each tourist. Not only will this be an educational experience for the family outing as well. Schools and churches will be able to use the open house for a small usage fee (no reservations will be charged).

Community Events

Grand Opera House of the South will open its doors to not-for-profit and for-profit organizations for rental. Many local and regional acting groups and presenters have already planned to house their events at the opera house, commenting on its "amazing" space.

Ballroom Activities

Originally used for cotillion balls and the like, the ballroom will also be available for rent for private parties, dinners, and receptions with a seating capacity of 135 and standing capacity of 250. Grand Opera House of the South will use the $100,000 raised for the Ballroom for "Meet the Artists" parties as well as pre and post performance gatherings. Another priority of this space will be to focus the promotion of the visual arts of local and traveling artists.

Theatre History

Born in 1867, David E. Lyons had one vision for his small town of Crowley, Louisiana, which at the time only had 4,000 citizens. His vision was to bring culture to his beloved town and he would do so by building the Grand, a 22,000 square foot second-story opera house in 1909. At the age of twenty-nine, Mr. Lyons purchased the property for a mere $500 and began building his magnificent opera house, which was completed two years and $18,000 later.

Mr. Lyons carefully constructed his masterpiece using vine Louisiana cypress, pine and oak. This mostly wooden structure was accented with recessed tin tiles and hand-painted angel medallions in the four-dolled seats. The steep slope of the floor secured perfect sight lines for the 1,200 seats that had to be held.

On opening night, November 23, 1909, 1,000 patrons went to see Harry Ward’s Minstrels. A comment written in the local newspaper, the Daily Sentinel, following the performance states, "It was a pleasant surprise to all of them to know that Crowley possesses such a beautiful little playhouse." Other acts throughout the 39 years it remained open included Huey Long, Clark Gable, opium singer Currahee Dade, Ruth, and Madame de Vilchez-Boss of the Paris Opera. Most often used as a vaudeville house, changing times forced it to serve a dual purpose as a silent-movie house.

When Mr. Lyons died in 1940, the opera house was closed and was left nearly untouched and fortunately well preserved. Although it was hidden from the view of the public for almost 60 years, it was never forgotten by his former patrons. Nowosee all want the time that we, too, can embrace this rich history and bring it back to life.

Naming Opportunities

The very nature of restoring and renovating Grand Opera House of the South lends itself to providing recognition opportunities for families and corporations to name various parts of the venue. The following major naming opportunities are offered as suggestions by early leadership donors and may be combined to meet the interests of our donors.

- **Grand Circle**
  - $10,000 and above
- **Grand Director**
  - $7,500 - $9,999
- **Grand Founder**
  - $5,000 - $7,499
- **Grand Patron**
  - $2,500 - $4,999
- **Grand Giver**
  - $1,000 - $2,499
- **Grand Benefactor**
  - $500 - $999
- **Grand Donor**
  - $250 - $499
- **Grand Contributor**
  - $100 - $249
- **Grand Friend**
  - $25 - $99
- **Other**
  - $500 each
  - Piano Key ($)
    - $450 each
Grand Opera House
of the South
Crowley, Louisiana

Your donation to Grand Opera House of the South is an integral part of the success of the restoration and renovation project. Gifts of any amount are appreciated and treasured. Thank you for your generosity and for choosing to be a part of this project. Together, we can make a difference.

Individual/Corporation/Foundation Name:

Contact Name (if different from above):

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Home Phone: Work Phone: Fax:

E-mail Address:

I/we would like to assist in the ambitious undertaking of Grand Opera House of the South. In unity with the restoration and renovation project, I/we wish to donate the following to Grand Opera House of the South's Restoration Drive:

____ Seat(s) $450 each
____ Piano Key(s) $500 each
____ Donation $____

Please make check(s) payable to Grand Opera House of the South.

Mail to: Grand Opera House of the South
505 N. Parkerson Ave.
Crowley, LA 70526

For more information, call (337) 785-0440.