



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Shea's 710 Theatre Receives Major Funding Boost from Senator Jacobs

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(Buffalo, NY) – Shea's 710 Theatre will be the recipient of \$200,000 in state funds obtained by Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD). The monies will support construction costs for building upgrades that are part of a multi-year project. Shea's President Michael G. Murphy joined with Jacobs at a press conference to announce the funding one day prior to the start of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Curtain Up Celebration, which marks the beginning of the 2017-2018 Buffalo professional theatre season.

“I am very pleased to be able to secure such significant funding for this visionary project that is transforming this great theatre,” said Senator Jacobs. “By following a renovation strategy similar to that of Shea’s Buffalo Theatre, Shea’s 710 Theatre will become a more appealing destination for the best productions and top performers, increasing its value as an asset to the community and the theatre district.”

Shea’s Performing Arts Center acquired the 710 Theatre (formerly Studio Arena Theatre) approximately five years ago with a stated mission of presenting dramatic plays in collaboration with local and regional theater companies. The theatre is also used by a number of local schools for plays and concerts, as well as educational programs presented by the Performing Arts Center. The broader vision for the development of the theatre resulted in comprehensive renovations that would vastly improve the patron experience while significantly improving the competitive draw of the theatre.

“We are thankful for the significant support from the State and Senator Chris Jacobs,” said Murphy. “The renovation and expansion allows us to bring the full Shea’s experience to 710 by providing patrons with an open and upgraded entertainment area, space for conversation and interaction before/during/after a show, as well as opportunities to host events such as play readings in a unique and historic building.”

The total estimated cost associated with all phases of the renovation is \$1.5 million. An economic impact study released earlier this year by the Americans for the Arts projects that Western New York’s nonprofit arts and culture industry sector generates more than \$352 million in activity. Both Jacobs and Murphy pointed to the study as additional validation for investing in the 710 Theatre improvements saying that tomorrow night’s Curtain Up celebration will be even more enjoyable and take on even greater meaning knowing that funding was secured for the project.

“As a 25-year subscriber of the former Studio Arena Theatre it broke my heart when it closed,” said 710 Theatre Board Chair Ross Eckert. “Together with Tony Conte and the banks that held the mortgages to this building, we worked hard to ensure that the 710 Main Street building continues to operate as a working theatre. With the help and support of the Shea’s Board, the hardworking staff and now Senator Jacobs, we once again have a very viable and vibrant theatre to help anchor Buffalo’s Theatre District!”

Early phases of the project included exterior painting, replacing heating units and improving the aesthetics and functionality of the theatre’s lobby. Another soon to be completed phase consists of the expansion of the lobby to allow for better accommodation of more patrons and the creation of event space to help generate additional revenue for the theatre.

Subsequent phases will include upgrading the café/concession area, installation of a new theatrical lighting system, replacing patron seating in the theatre, significant upgrades to the performers’ dressing rooms and replacing the building’s roof.

“This project ensures that Shea’s 710 Theatre continues to evolve and become an even more vital element of Buffalo’s Theatre District,” said Jacobs. “Enabling the theatre to dramatically improve on the patron experience, improve its competitive position and at the same time become more self-sufficient financially is a great return on the state’s investment,” Jacobs concluded.