



NEWS RELEASE

City of Des Plaines Celebrates Opening of Historic Downtown Theatre with Official Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

**Immediate Release
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Des Plaines Mayor Andrew Goczkowski, the Des Plaines City Council, in partnership with Rivers Casino and Onesti Entertainment, along with current and former community leaders, celebrated the reopening of the historic Des Plaines Theatre yesterday. About 100 local dignitaries attended the dedication and ceremonial ribbon-cutting.

Mayor Goczkowski and City Manager Michael G. Bartholomew provided remarks from the stage followed by Corey Wise, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Rivers Casino Des Plaines and Ron Onesti, CEO/President, Onesti Entertainment.

Mayor Goczkowski said, "This is an exciting day for Des Plaines! I'm extremely proud of this theatre's rebirth and appreciate the partnerships that made it happen – including our current and former elected officials, our community that we represent, Rivers Casino and Ron Onesti. A big thank you also goes to our extraordinary City team who worked behind the scenes for the last several years to bring this local gem (back) to life. I invite everyone from near and far to come for a show, and stay to eat, drink and discover Des Plaines."

The City Council made the decision to purchase the theatre for \$1.3 million in 2018 after it sat vacant for many years. To make the project feasible, Rivers agreed to provide financial support to assist with the property's purchase and renovation. The City invested \$6.7 million in the renovation. The City recognized that the theatre's restoration could drive transformational downtown revitalization and economic development. The theatre is located in the heart of downtown Des Plaines across the street from the Metra Train station.

"Rivers is committed to investing in the community and we appreciated the opportunity to help the city bring this cultural amenity back to life as part of its plan to rejuvenate the downtown area. We look forward to memorable performances in this beautiful and historic venue in the years ahead," Wise said.

Ron Onesti agreed to operate and invest in the theatre, including adding two new restaurants there—Bourbon 'N Brass, a Speakeasy featuring a 1920s decor that reflects the Prohibition Era origins of the legendary venue, and Des Pizza, a wood-fired pizza and Rock 'n Roll experience.

Onesti said, "I am truly honored to be opening this historic piece of Des Plaines history. It has been a pleasure working with the City of Des Plaines and Rivers Casino to restore the theatre to its original 1925 splendor. Now it's time to bring live music back to Des Plaines, and I look forward to being a part of the community for many years to come."

The theatre has the capacity for nearly 1,000 people. Hollywood legend and country music star Kevin Costner will perform at the grand opening on Oct. 31. A limited number of tickets are available. For more information, visit www.oshows.com.

Background

- The original vaudeville theatre was built in 1925 for live performances. It became a movie theater in the 1930s through about 2014 when it became vacant.
- The nearly 100-year-old building required extensive construction work, including major upgrades to comply with City safety codes, including fire suppression, adding an elevator, all new plumbing and other necessary repairs. The City gave great attention to maintaining the historic and classic features of the vintage building, including the decorative terra cotta on the exterior and interior.
- Theatre features new, modern marquee that is a replica of the original vintage one.
- The Des Plaines Public Works & Engineering Department served as general contractor for construction and managed every step of the project including, engaging architects, structural engineers and mechanical engineers to assist.
- Construction took three years with the pandemic presenting some challenges, as with most businesses, including supply shortages.

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Contact:

Jennie Vana

Director of Media Services
City of Des Plaines
1420 Miner Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016
P. 847.391.5312 C. 847.257.2004
Connect with Us:
desplaines.org



Dana Petrie

Director of Marketing
The Onesti Entertainment Corporation
dana@oshows.com
Office: 630-962-7000, Cell: 617-719-0918
www.oshows.com