

State Provides Big Financial Boost to Help Lompoc Theatre Rise Again

Sen. Monique Limón, Assemblymember Gregg Hart reveal \$2,285,000 allocation from state for renovation

by Janene Scully | Noozhawk North County Editor
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The restoration and revival of the historic Lompoc Theatre received a huge financial boost of nearly \$2.3 million on Monday, with state Sen. Monique Limón declaring it “a good and happy day.”

On Monday morning, about 50 people including Limón, Assemblymember Gregg Hart, other local leaders, and community members gathered for the announcement of the state providing \$2,285,000 for the project.

“It’s hard to quantify just what this means to us,” said Mark Herrier, Lompoc Theatre Project executive director. “It will change everything. For the first time, it enables me to say that I am confident that we will be able to reopen this theater in time for its 100th birthday on May 27, 2027.”

Cheers and applause accompanied the announcement made inside the building, which has been gutted.

“It’s hard to say what this does. It’s a giant leap forward for the 75,000 people who live within 15 minutes of this stage, who right now in the city of arts and flowers do not have a single art and cultural center to celebrate in,” Herrier said. “This changes that.”



Herrier grew up in Lompoc, and went on act in movies and TV series, including “Porky’s” and the two sequels. He admitted the topic of the theater makes him both evangelical and emotional.

The marquee outside the theater at 112 North H St. saluted Limon’s efforts to secure the funding,

“This is going to physically light up the community, but it will also light up the spirit of so many people that have contributed to ensuring that today happens,” she added. “We have done this collectively.”

While she and Hart worked to secure the state funds, Limón noted that many people came together to propel the project forward.

“I’m very proud to have worked with Senator Limón to secure this really critical funding for this fabulous project to really kickstart the Lompoc theater renovation,” Hart said.

Hart, whose 37th Assembly District includes Santa Barbara County and a portion of southern San Luis Obispo County, said a conversation with his 93-year-old mother pointed out that the first movie he saw was in the Lompoc Theatre.

“It was the Mary Poppins production, which I think is serendipitous,” Hart said. “This is such an amazing building that has such an incredible future.”

In addition to serving as a culture arts center, the project will provide significant economic benefits for Lompoc, Hart added.

On Monday, Hart called Herrier, the longtime leader of the Lompoc Theatre Project, the Mary Poppins of the restoration effort.

The nonprofit Lompoc Theatre Project has worked for a decade to raise funds for the project estimated to cost \$10 million.

Most recently, efforts have focused on a matching grant from the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, which agreed to match up to \$150,000 in donations. Just months into the campaign, they are just \$20,000 short of the goal, Herrier said.

Work so far has included removing bat guano and theater seats, along with crafting plans for the future.

This month marks 11 years since the start of the project. In that first year, they raised \$1,800.

Since, then, they have had 5,000 donations raising a total of almost \$600,000, with 99% amounting to \$100 or less, showing the support for the restoration.

“It shows how much the town wants this. It shows how much the town needs this, and it shows how much we could not do this without your help,” Herrier said.

The grassroots effort has been fueled by the motto, “This theater will rise again.”

“That anthem is no longer applicable. It is in fact become obsolete because after this check, this theater is rising,” Herrier said.

With a contractor lined up, Herrier said, work on the second phase of the restoration could get started by June, Herrier said.

Information about donating to the Lompoc Theatre Project’s restoration effort can be found by clicking here.

In November 2022, Limón announced Guadalupe’s efforts to restore the Royal Theater in that North County city would received a \$5 million for restoration efforts.

While in Lompoc on Monday, she hinted there’s more good news to come next month for Central Coast theaters. Her Senate District 19 includes Santa Barbara County plus part of Ventura County.

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