



HISTORIC TENNESSEE THEATRE BOARD SELECTS DENARK AS CONTRACTOR FOR RESTORATION



The Historic Tennessee Theatre Foundation Board announced that Denark Construction, Inc. of Knoxville has been selected as general contractor for the restoration of the theater.

After a thorough review process, the board's Building Committee recommended from a group of five local contractors that submitted proposals on the project.

The construction company joins with architect McCarty Holsaple McCarty, a Knoxville company that is partnering on the project with theater restoration experts van Dijk Westlake Reed and Leskosky, of Cleveland, Ohio.

"This was a very difficult decision," said Foundation Board President Bruce Hartmann. "All of the firms are very qualified, but we feel that Denark best matches our needs on this project.

"The Board appreciates the interest shown in the Tennessee Theatre by all the firms and thanks each one for their proposals."

Raja Jubran, Denark chief executive officer, said: "The theater holds a special place in the hearts of East Tennesseans who have seen great entertainers and classic movies in the theater. We are pleased to lend our expertise to restoring the theater into a center for the performing arts and making it a cornerstone of downtown revitalization."

Theater restoration is scheduled to begin in June 2003 and could be completed by late 2004 or early 2005. The foundation has raised more than \$13 million toward a \$20 million restoration campaign goal.

Persons interested in contributing to the restoration may call Becky Hancock at 673-9613.

"We are looking for wide support from the community to help us raise the additional \$7 million necessary," Hartmann said. "We have raised enough to begin serious design and construction activities."

The theater badly needs improvement in keeping with modern entertainment needs, while at the same time preserving its historic character. A new stage is needed to increase the Tennessee's ability to bring modern productions to Knoxville. Plaster is coming off walls, and the marble lobby floor is cracked. Lighting, heating and air conditioning, dressing rooms and rest rooms need updating.

The Tennessee Theatre was built in 1928 during the golden period of grand movie palace construction across the United States.

Most of these grand entertainment palaces have been demolished, but several have been preserved and restored.

The Tennessee Theatre is the official State Theater of Tennessee and is on the National Register of Historic Places.