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Contact: Theresa Kennedy

716-829-1158 | 716-803-4281 (cell)

tkennedy@sheas.org

Shea's Announces Major Improvements to Shea's 710 Theatre

**Project Is Next Step in a Larger Vision to Improve the Patron
Experience & Re-energize Buffalo's Theatre District**

Shea's Performing Arts Center announced a \$5 million project that will transform the public spaces at Shea's 710 Theatre. The fast-tracked initiative will improve accessibility, expand performance opportunities, and significantly enhance the visitor experience. This is the first of several investments planned on the Shea's campus and throughout the Buffalo Theatre District as Shea's Buffalo Theatre launches its 100th anniversary celebration.

"This project at Shea's 710 Theatre continues our vision of creating a more exciting, dynamic, and vibrant space in Shea's theatres and throughout Buffalo's Theatre District," **said Shea's President and CEO Brian Higgins.** "As a historic, iconic and anchor institution, Shea's can be a catalyst in elevating this block as a year-round destination – a goal that benefits the neighborhood, community, and region."

Project features include:

Lounge & Cabaret: The most dramatic transformation of the project will be the creation of a two-story lounge and cabaret, which will open to a new seasonal patio on Main Street. Featuring soaring two-story glazing within the building's iconic arches, the space will include a bar, stage, and seating for up to 100. The design draws inspiration from the building's mid-century architecture and the theater's unique history. The new space will provide exciting opportunities for activation before, after, and beyond the theater's productions.

Accessibility: As part of the project, fully accessible restrooms will be introduced, marking the first in the theater's public facing areas. Additionally, a new sensory room be created to ensure that the theater experience is inclusive and accessible to all patrons.

Community Engagement & Education: A new multipurpose room will allow Shea's to provide, for the first time ever, an arts education space that is handicap accessible. Existing rehearsal halls on the historic Shea's campus are currently on second floor levels without elevator access, due to the age of the buildings. The flexible space can also be used for event rentals, pre/post-show receptions, community events, and cabaret overflow seating.

Efficiencies: Also featured are updated restrooms, box office, coat check, and concession areas with new fixtures, technology and ADA compliant counter-height service points.

Exterior: The new two-story glazing in the lounge and cabaret, facing Main Street, will serve to both entice and invite the public inside. A seasonal patio at the base of this glazing will extend the theater's performances to Main Street, creating an engaging connection with the surrounding district and community. An upgraded marquee, along with digital signage around the building, will offer a dynamic façade, showcasing upcoming performances and events while pulling visitors into the heart of the Theater District.

Long-Term Stability: Investments also include a new roof and HVAC mechanics as well as improved water and lighting system efficiencies.

"Today we kick off an exciting new chapter in the life of Shea's 710 Theatre," **said Jonathan Dandes, Chairman of the Shea's Board of Trustees.** "One that expands our offerings as an entertainment hub, enhances the visitor experience, and continues to make Shea's a destination that brings people together for generations to come."

In November of 2024, a long-term agreement was announced to make Shea's 710 Theatre the new home for MusicalFare Theatre. The partnership, which starts this fall, will increase active days at Shea's 710 Theatre by 50 percent, adding 100 performances by MusicalFare on the main theatre and lounge cabaret stages. Stay tuned for the new season lineup for Shea's 710 Theatre and MusicalFare Theatre set to be announced on April 14.

"MusicalFare is thrilled with the proposed expansion and renovation of the Shea's 710 lounge and cabaret. With our after show performances and cabarets we look forward to making it a theatre district destination," **said Randall Kramer, Artistic/Executive Director, MusicalFare Theatre.**

Architecture, planning, and design for the project has been led by an incredible team of professionals at [Carmina Wood Design](#), who bring vast experience in the redevelopment of historic properties and expertise in creative functionality.

“Carmina Wood Design is humbled to be entrusted with the renovation of this iconic Buffalo landmark, and we are thrilled to contribute to the ambitious plans Shea’s Buffalo has for the Theater District,” **said Steve Carmina, President & CEO of Carmina Wood Design.** “The partnership of MusicalFare and Shea’s has inspired and driven the design for this project, responding to the opportunities and demands it presents. Our design will open and expand the functionality of the theater’s front-of-house, creating a dynamic and accessible space that engages both patrons and the public. The reimagined spaces will foster new opportunities for performance, learning, creativity, and connection, offering a welcoming, dynamic entrance to 710 and strengthening the Buffalo Theater District as a vibrant cultural destination.”

While Carmina Wood Design will lead the project’s architecture, the construction management of 710 Theatre is under the purview of Buffalo Construction (BCC). Subcontracts have been awarded for the first phase of work, including demolition, mechanical and electrical scopes. Iroquois Bar Corp (NYS certified MBE), Danforth Mechanical and Frey Electric have been selected respectively to perform the work in the first phase. Packages for upcoming phases of work are currently out to bid. Throughout the bid process Shea’s is committed to maximizing opportunities for diverse subcontractors and vendors as well as union workforce.

BCC senior vice president, Peter Dechert, said, “This is a fun project, one where the entire team is working together to deliver a great project that is going to benefit the community. Alongside Carmina Wood Design and the Shea’s team we’ve developed a project phasing plan that will minimize disruptions to 710 Theatre operations, while condensing the construction duration so that the project will be finished in 2025.”

Work at Shea’s 710 Theatre focuses on the public spaces outside the theatre house’s stage and seating area, which underwent a complete renovation in 2022. Work began the first week of March and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2025. Performances will continue while construction is underway.

Formerly home to the acclaimed Studio Arena Theatre and originally built as the Palace Burlesque, Shea’s Performing Arts Center acquired Shea’s 710 Theatre in 2011. The space hosts touring shows and features productions from Western New York’s top theatre companies.


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Renderings:

 [710 Cabaret View C.jpg](#)

 [710_Exterior Day.jpg](#)

 [710_Exterior Night.jpg](#)

 [710_Multi B.jpg](#)

 [710_Lobby A.jpg](#)

[710_Cabaret View A](#)