



DAILY NEWS

Previous Issues...

GO!

- > Top Stories
- > Design and Construction News
- > Real Estate News
- > Finance News
- > Law News
- > Opinion/Columns
- > People In The News

BUSINESS LEADS & LEGALS

- > Public Notices
- > Sub Bids
- > Official Call for Bids
- > Portland City Council Agenda

COMMERCE MAGAZINE

- > February 2006
- > Magazine Archives

More funding, new name for Pearl's Armory Theater

by Kennedy Smith
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Portland Center Stage last week announced it has received \$6.75 million in new funding to complete its renovation of the historic Armory Theater in Northwest Portland.

PCS said Thursday that it secured \$6.75 million in new funding to complete work on the building, now known as the Bob and Diana Gerding Theater, at Eleventh Avenue between Couch and Davis streets in Portland's Pearl District.

Federal energy and New Markets tax credits make up \$6.1 million of the additional funding for the building's rehabilitation, and \$650,000 comes from federal conservation and economic development grants.

The investment brings the total raised by PCS to more than \$24 million, about 68 percent of its campaign total of \$36 million. The new funds cover 100 percent of the project's construction costs and contribute \$2.1 million toward its fundraising goal, PCS said.

"These new funds will allow us to deliver additional community resources like a park and interactive commons that were identified as needs but were not in the project's core budget," said Julie Vigeland, chairwoman of the Portland Center Stage in the Pearl campaign.

The theater company will also receive a \$250,000 grant over two years from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, PCS said.

The theater's developer, Gerding/Edlen Development Co., said the project is on track to become the first historic rehabilitation project to receive platinum certification through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system.

Built in 1891, the Portland Armory is on the National Register of Historic Places. The structure was originally used to house the First Regiment Militia and became a venue for sporting events.

Upon the renovation's completion later this year, the building will house a 599-seat main stage theater and a 200-seat studio theater located beneath the seats of the main stage. The lobby will contain interactive exhibits and will have extended business hours for a café, facility tours, conferences and special events.

The building's original wooden trusses will stay intact underneath an insulated corrugated steel roof, PCS said. A red brick interior façade is the backdrop for what PSC's Chris Coleman called "neutral to highlight the original architecture." The theater will also feature stark concrete walls in the lobby area and an open staircase leading to a second-level mezzanine, PCS said.

Along with Gerding/Edlen and GBD Architects, the Armory's project team includes Hoffman Construction Co., LEED consultants Glumac International,

civil engineering firm KPFF Consulting Engineers, theater design company Landry & Bogan, Listen Acoustics, design firm the Felt Hat, Portland General Electric, Green Building Services, Heritage Consulting Group, Murase Architects and Geodesign Inc.

The Bob and Diana Gerding Theater is scheduled to open Sept. 30.