



CITY OF TYLER COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
Susan Guthrie, APR
Communications Director
Office 903.533.7444
Cell 903.920.8070
sguthrie@tylertexas.com

Press Release

For Immediate Release
March 26, 2008

Major Anchor Announced for New Tyler 21 Downtown Business Arts & Culture District

At a news conference held today, Tyler Mayor Joey Seeber announced that the East Texas Symphony Orchestra Association (ETSOA) has entered into an agreement with the City of Tyler to locate its administrative offices in downtown Tyler and lead an effort to renovate the former Liberty Theater into a recital and performance hall. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was approved by the City Council that details the agreement to make ETSOA a major anchor in the soon to be created Tyler 21 Downtown Business, Arts and Culture District.

“Having the Symphony in Downtown Tyler is an important step toward implementing the Tyler 21 plan to create a Business, Arts and Culture District in downtown,” said Seeber. “I couldn’t have dreamed of a better beginning to this effort.”

The MOU details a ten year lease for the ETSOA to occupy administrative offices at 107 E. Erwin with an option to purchase the property in the future. As a provision to the agreement, the City has agreed to purchase the former Liberty Theater located at 103 E. Erwin. The ETSOA will raise the estimated \$800,000 to renovate the Liberty into a multi-purpose theater with seating for approximately 300. The renovated facility will primarily be used for recitals and performing arts activities that will benefit tourism in the community.

“The Symphony has been an integral part of the culture of this community since 1936,” said ETSOA Executive Director Nancy Wrenn. “We are thrilled with the opportunity to collaborate with the City to enhance our mission through their vision for downtown Tyler.”

“The Symphony has sought to expand its patron base and events,” ETSOA President-Elect Jeff Austin III. “Establishing a performing arts center in downtown will fast track this effort and act as a regional draw for tourism in Tyler.”

(More)

The initial cost estimate to renovate the theater is \$800,000 plus an initial operating reserve, insurance and production equipment. Per the terms of the MOU, with support from the City the ETSOA will launch a campaign to raise the funds needed to complete the renovations to the structure. The MOU does provide for naming rights to the theater as part of the fundraising campaign.

“It is a real watershed moment for the redevelopment of downtown Tyler,” said Beverly Abell, executive director for the Heart of Tyler Main Street Program. “The theater will be a major quality destination for downtown. This is one of those events that every downtown development program hopes for; we feel very fortunate that this is coming to fruition.”

Management and ownership of the theater will be transferred to the ETSOA upon completion of all renovations with the City maintaining some oversight related to funding for tourism related activities.

“This development signals the beginning of a real renaissance of downtown,” said Mark McDaniel, City manager designate. “The next several years are going to be very exciting for downtown Tyler.”

###