



The Coronado Theatre

The Experience is
Magical



FRIENDS OF THE CORONADO

ADVOCATING FOR & PRESERVING THE CORONADO THEATRE FOR ALL TO USE & SHARE

Dear Friends of the Coronado,

January 2022

On behalf of the Friends of the Coronado Board of Directors, I wish to extend our deepest appreciation for your past support and interest in the Coronado Theatre. Now, after almost a year and a half on pause, the Coronado has re-opened and is once again hosting exceptional performances.

While Performances were paused last year, preservation work and project planning continued. Thanks to your support, we unveiled a stunning restoration of the Coronado Marquee and the historic lobby lighting.

Working alongside community members we established an action plan to deepen our commitment to ensure a more inclusive environment at the Coronado Performing Arts Center.

We are expanding our youth programs this year. The Coronado is part of a community wide effort to invest in our youth this school year more than ever. We are answering the call by educators to create greater field trip opportunities to the Coronado through the **Coronado Classroom** and **Reach for the Stars projects**. You are an important part of the success of our extensive youth programs.

Twenty-five years ago a group of citizens came together to save the Coronado and formed the Friends of the Coronado.

Then and now our priorities remain the same:

- Historic preservation with impeccable accuracy and excellence
- High-quality student educational programming
- Community access to the Coronado for "all to use and share"

We value your continued partnership. Your donation or pledge will make it possible for us to secure the future of the Coronado Theatre.

Thank You! We hope you will always feel the reward of your contribution each time you catch sight of our dazzling new Marquee, see school buses delivering school children for their special day at the Coronado, or experience the magic of the Coronado's beauty as an audience member.

Welcome back to the Coronado!

Gratefully,

Beth Howard, Executive Director

Secure online donations can be made at www.friendsofthecoronado.org with no additional fees. Checks made payable to the Friends of the Coronado can be mailed to: **Friends of the Coronado, P. O. Box 1976, Rockford, IL 61110**

Please contact us to learn more about our projects and programs. Email: bhoward@coronadopac.org Phone: 815-847-6314



Saving and Preserving the Coronado Theatre

Historic places are where our lives, memories and stories began. They connect us to the past, anchor us to the present, and lead us into the future. These places inspire us to create a stronger nation, because they belong to all of us.

[National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

For 25 years, the Friends of the Coronado has led the historic preservation of the Coronado Theatre. Thanks to the passion and dedication of our supporters, we're able to protect and preserve the Coronado Theatre, and advocated for its care. Meticulous research with preservation and historic theater experts figures into each project. The reward of this level of "best practices" is so wonderfully apparent in our Marquee and historic lobby lighting restoration.



Our restored Marquee is bright and beautiful. It was returned to its original rich colors. It boasts modernized mechanical systems and new energy efficiency with nearly 3,000 LED fixtures. The new LED bulbs are designed with the correct warmth and shape that are reminiscent of the historic 1927 incandescent bulbs. The LED bulbs are rated for weathering the elements and operating with modern flashing systems unique to a marquee sign. Months of research and networking across the country produced the perfect product choice for our beautiful Coronado marquee. The new Marquee is 90% more energy efficient than incandescent lighting, and is a big WOW in downtown Rockford! As a result of our new energy efficiency, we are "over the moon" to see our Marquee glowing every evening.

In the **Historic Lobby**, one of the Coronado's most spectacular scenes, the recessed and reflected lighting of the large cove ceiling was restored to the rich reflected rose tinted illumination of the original 1927 ambiance. We're grateful to have our Marquee and historic lobby returned to their regal beauty.

Upcoming restoration projects include the auditorium LED lighting conversion. Like all lighting projects, the lighting in the expansive auditorium is a delicate project to preserve the architectural character. We've waited several years for the correct LED technology and are looking forward to finalizing the plans for this project

Additionally, the six original historic auditorium gilded doors and doorway architectural details are in our plans for restoration after 20 years—over a thousand performances, and a million people who have enjoyed Coronado experiences.





Expanded Youth and Community Outreach in 2022

Shared Experiences and Building Bridges for Belonging and Inclusion

Coronado student outreach projects will serve over 5,000 students.

School age children have experienced unimaginable circumstances in their education over the last 18 months. The schools reported that the students need creative and engaging educational experiences outside of the classroom. In response, we are expanding our student experiences through the **Coronado Classroom** and **Reach for the Stars** projects.



Reach for the Stars performances traditionally brings all RPS 4th grade students to a world class touring performance. This year we have expanded to include 4th and 5th grade students in order to include last year's students for whom there was no performance during the pandemic closure.

friendsofthecoronado.org
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2019 REACH for the Stars Photos





Expanded Youth and Community Outreach in 2022



2019 Coronado Classroom Photos

Truly one of most unique student experiences in our region is the **Coronado Classroom Education Center**. The Classroom brings individual school classes to the Coronado for an informal and interactive experience. Through our photo archives and artifacts and guest presenters, it is a unique approach to bring history to life. We compare Coronado history with local and global events. Here are the kind of topics we talk about:

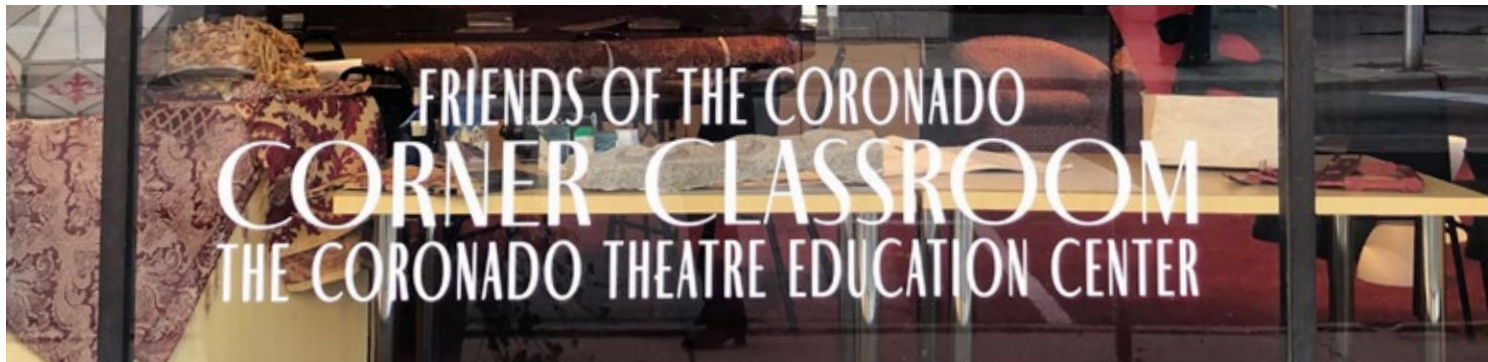
- The roaring 20's when the Coronado was constructed
- The Great Depression when Rockfordians left their hardships for a short time in the magical theater seeing low cost movies and leaving their troubles behind.
- During WWII, this beautiful building inspired our community to raise a national record of \$175,000 in war bonds in a single evening at a variety talent show by Camp Grant personnel. The event was documented in Life Magazine.
- We filled the streets and every seat when presidential candidate John F. Kennedy came to town in 1960.
- The community came together in 1997 to save the Coronado Theatre, winning national awards for the project.

We also introduce the students to the concept of historical preservation and lessons in civic engagement from the 2001 restoration project.





Coronado Corner Education Center Opens to the Public



The Friends of the Coronado and the Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society Joining Together

The Coronado Theatre is considered to be one of the top three atmospheric theaters in North America, because of its beauty, size and impeccable standards of historic preservation. The Coronado is also in a rare class of theaters with an extensive collection of historical archives, artifacts meticulously curated, and the original Coronado Grand Barton Organ. The collection is made possible by the Coronado's **Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society** longtime efforts.

Since 1979, the remarkable group of volunteers in the **Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society** (LOLTOS) has archived the Coronado history, collected artifacts and maintained the original Barton Organ. The LOLTOS organization single handedly staved off a threatened demolition of the theater in the 1980s. The Friends of the Coronado is honored to join together with this remarkable organization to help preserve and promote the rich history of the Coronado for our community and region.

Photos, newspaper clippings, and firsthand accounts of the Coronado's history from the LOLTOS archives are on display for the public's viewing in the Coronado Classroom Education Center of the Coronado Theatre. It's truly an exceptional display of living history.



The LOLTOS Grand Barton Organ



Presidential Candidate John F. Kennedy, 1960

For more information to plan a visit to the Coronado Education Center please email bhoward@coronadopac.org or call 815.847.6314

Our re-opening in September 2021 transported our thoughts to the original grand opening of the Coronado Theatre October 9, 1927. We hope you enjoy reading the Coronado's grand opening announcement published in the Rockford Morning Star.



Information and photos provided by the Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society

October 9, 1927

Great States Theatres Inc.
Presents the
CORONADO
Rockford's Wonder Theatre

Imposing in its grandeur, exotic in its lavish beauty stands the new Coronado, significant of a work well done, of a dream come true, of the progress of Rockford towards metropolitan proportions.

Aglow with the enchanting atmosphere of Old Spain, breathing the magic spell of the Orient, the Coronado is triumph in architecture, a monument to modern engineering. The Old World and the New blend in this enchanting Temple of Progress, in this glorious tribute to the growth and integrity of Rockford.

This luxurious theatre is the realization of the life's dream of W. N. Van Matre who, with his associates in the Rockford Enterprises Inc. found in this community the encouragement and support which urged them on to the fulfillment of their ambitions. Not content merely to give Rockford a beautiful show place, these men have produced for the community one of the World's Wonder Theaters.

It is a structure in keeping with the vast strides of the motion picture and stage entertainment. It is another goal post in the advancement of Great States Theatres Inc., for this organization united with Rockford Enterprises in furnishing and equipping the Coronado and now operates it. Adding this show place to its chain of theaters which covers Illinois.

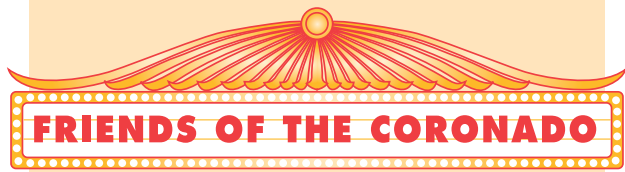
Entertainment in keeping with the lavishness of the theater itself will be provided by Great States – the “down-state” unity of Balban and Katz and part of the world's greatest theatrical enterprise – Publix Theatres Inc. The motion picture market will be searched for the best of the screen output and upon the Coronado Stage will be seen production which can be found only in metropolitan theater of New York and Chicago – and in deluxe Great States theaters.

Art treasures, rare hangings, superb sculpturing, enhances the architectural grandeur of the Coronado, which Sunday will open its doors to the public as one of the world's finest show places.

To the swell of great music, emanating from a grand organ; to the tinkling tunes of syncopation and the strains of the symphony orchestra, Rockford will pass through the magnificent foyer into the auditorium with an acre of seats, there to see unsurpassed entertainment in a glorious setting.

Royalty has its palaces, kings of finance their mansions, and Rockford has its Community Center – the Coronado – a place of entertainment which cost nearly two millions of dollars – a theater that rivals the show places of the world – and yet a meeting place glowing with neighborliness and homelike good cheer with the utmost in service and an abundance of hearty good will at all times for the people of this community by whom this theater was made possible and for whom it was built.





P O Box 1976
Rockford, IL 61110

friendsofthecoronado.org
815.847.6314

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Thank you! You are a Coronado champion.
Thank you for your always generous and
warm embrace of the Coronado Theatre.
You have our deepest appreciation.

The Mission of the Friends of the Coronado is to
champion the historic Coronado Theatre, a time
honored symbol of civic pride, as a performing arts
center and community asset for all to use and share.

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Beth Howard, *Executive Director*

Friends of the Coronado is a 501(C)(3)
not-for-profit corporation

**Please contact us to learn more
about our projects and programs**

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