

KESQ News Channel 3

Palm Springs to discuss future of Plaza Theatre with \$12M price tag

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PALM SPRINGS, Calif. - The City of Palm Springs is discussing the future of the historic Plaza Theatre, which is due for a major renovation -- as city leaders launch an effort to raise the millions of dollars the project would cost.

In January, Palm Springs Mayor Robert Moon took News Channel 3's Jake Ingrassia on a tour of the theater, and said the structure of the building is still sound.

"The bones of this place are incredibly intact, it's solid as a rock," Palm Springs Mayor Robert Moon said. "But it needs a good old fashioned Palm Springs facelift."

The Plaza Theatre closed its doors in 2014 after nearly 80 years. The theater, home of the Palm Springs Follies act, was an economic boom for nearby businesses.

Mayor Moon said it would take a minimum of \$10 million, and probably more like \$12 million, to take care of everything that needs to be done. About \$7 million are allocated for infrastructure improvements.

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The donations have already begun coming in, with the first donation from the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation.

"We're getting a check for \$50,000," said Palm Springs Councilmember J.R. Roberts. "This is our big kickoff."

Roberts said the theater is an important piece of Palm Springs history and the city's connection to Hollywood.

"It's been sitting there empty and we knew if we didn't go ahead and do it now, the theater was at risk of falling apart or worse," Roberts said.

At an April city council meeting, Palm Springs businessman and chairman of the Palm Springs International Film Festival Harold Matzner requested approval for the festival to use the theater. "The film festival will have access to the theater for two weeks in January at no charge," he said.

"When we see a great organization like the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation immediately come forward in our first few weeks with a \$50,000 donation, that excites me, that tells me that the community believes in this project," Roberts said.

City council says they hope to raise the rest of the money within two years. That \$50,000 check will be presented Thursday at 10 a.m. outside the Plaza Theatre, and city leaders say they'll unveil a big surprise announcement. Stay with News Channel 3 for developments.

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