

THE STATUS OF 'THE STATE'

Andy Ouriel, Sandusky Register Mar 27, 2021



Chris Parthemore, the Sandusky State Theatre's executive director, stands in the venue's empty performance area on Thursday, March 25, 2021. This building's portion sustained massive damages as a result of a June 10, 2020, windstorm.

SANDUSKY — Before the iconic venue can be built back up, it needed to go through a partial tear down in selected, albeit storied, sections.

For the past nine months — dating back to June 10, 2020, when a devastating, sudden windstorm ransacked through this illustrious

structure, causing a collapse of its roof and walls — Sandusky State Theatre-hired contractors needed to remove:

- Remnants of the wrecked Vaudeville-era stage, which has hosted thousands of performances, including some recent Broadway shows, since its debut in 1928
- Waterlogged seats, where attendees, concert-goers and family members of those participating in plays or dance recitals took in shows
- Marred equipment, which accentuated and spotlighted acclaimed entertainers, ranging from Wayne Newton to UB40.

In the actual theater portion, what remains is a bare-naked version of, arguably, the Firelands Region's most legendary building for arts and entertainment. “We had to protect the integrity of the historic landmark,” said theater executive director Chris Parthemore, who, on Thursday, invited the Register inside for an exclusive tour. Parthemore alluded to how contractors emptied damaged areas of the venue. It's a necessary precursor before design-related tasks can start and, then eventually, construction work.

Since the storm, both theater personnel and their hired contractors coordinated to “winterize” the building. Most notably, this meant buttoning up the stage area to protect everything else contained inside from further loss caused by outdoor elements.

Several quintessential theater amenities — including the signature wall, signed by many famous entertainers and musicians; the chandelier; and the marquee sign — somehow didn't sustain any damage.

“That was our first priority,” Parthemore said about winterizing the building. “We were able to get it enclosed before it got really cold. We were thankful for everybody that worked so diligently that got us from Point A to Point B.”

But what about Point C and an estimated timeline to achieve other vital checkpoints in the theater's ongoing rebuild process? “We do expect to have some updates for the public in the very near future, and we will be excited to share those with everybody,” Parthemore said.

Parthemore emphasized how the planning process promises to incorporate public feedback. “We want to make sure we have a thorough assessment of the community's needs and make sure we are addressing those as we move forward.” Many questions — including the theater's reopening date, new-look appearance, cost and possible insurance payment — remain unknown at this time.

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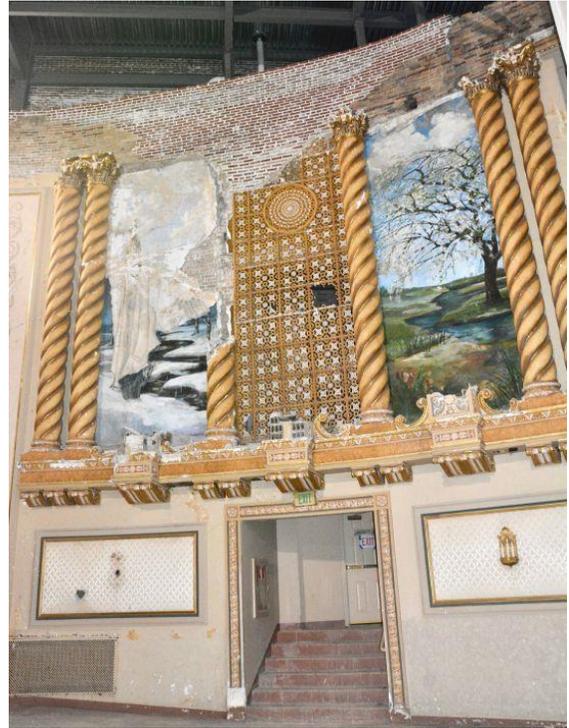
An ongoing fundraiser, put on by the Erie County Community Foundation, allows people to donate toward rebuilding efforts. People can visit eriefoundation.org/theatre-fund to make a donation.



L-Since a June 10, 2020, windstorm partially destroyed the Sandusky State Theatre, crews worked to enclose the downtown Sandusky structure. This included buttoning up the area previously exposing its stage.

Below-Many areas within the Sandusky State Theatre's performance area, including murals along its side walls, sustained substantial damages in the June 10, 2020, windstorm.

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L-The Sandusky State Theatre's chandelier, undamaged in the June 10, 2020, windstorm, is stored inside a box kept at the downtown Sandusky venue.

Below-Many of the Sandusky State Theatre's amenities remain in storage, and will stay there, until the rebuild process begins at an undetermined future date.





L-The Sandusky State Theatre's famed signature wall, undamaged in last year's windstorm, serves as a tribute to who's performed at this downtown Sandusky venue since its inception in 1928.

Below-The Sandusky State Theatre's basement, previously waterlogged from last year's windstorm, received a complete overhaul, which now features a leveled, concrete floor.

