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**City of Duluth - Communications Office**

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**DATE: 6/21/2016**

**SUBJECT: NorShor Theatre to Begin a New Life New Legacy**

**BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office**

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## **NorShor Theatre to Begin a New Life, New Legacy**

[Duluth, MN] - June 15 marked the beginning of the NorShor Theatre's long awaited revitalization as the epicenter of the Historic Arts and Theatre (HART) District and return to its original glory. Final documents for the transfer of ownership between the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA) and Sherman Associates were signed and plans are now in place to commence construction. In April, the Duluth City Council voted 8-1 on a 250-page development agreement with Sherman Associates and the Duluth Playhouse that catapulted the project towards implementation.

Many have anticipated this day. A large crowd gathered outside of the NorShor Theatre to kick off construction representing the City of Duluth, DEDA, Sherman Associates, Duluth Playhouse, State Legislators, City Councilors along with numerous supportive community members who have advocated for and worked on fundraising for the restoration including former Mayor Don Ness who originally championed the project.

"This is a new day for Duluth's HART district and will highlight Duluth as the performing arts hub for the region. The City is appreciative of all of the funders and partners and who have worked tirelessly for years to assemble the right people and complex financing to make this extensive renovation possible. We are looking forward to the next exciting production at the NorShor Theatre; the grand reopening!" said Mayor Emily Larson.

"The Duluth Economic Development Authority is excited to be a partner in this momentous project. Businesses looking to move here are looking for compelling reasons: workforce, education/training, housing, quality of place. We cannot discount the impact arts and cultural offerings have on our economy and community. The NorShor Theatre will light up downtown and shine majestic very soon," said Nancy Norr, President of the DEDA.

Construction preparations begin this week with anticipated completion in 2017.

"The restoration of the NorShor Theatre is possible because of a shared belief in the value of investing in our community. We would like to thank the City of Duluth, DEDA, the Duluth Playhouse, LISC, BMO Harris Bank, JP Morgan Chase, DEED, and the Minnesota Historical Society. Our efforts will have a profound impact on the both the City and the entire region. We are thrilled to begin construction," George Sherman, President of Sherman Associates.

Once completed, the restored NorShor will include:

- Bringing the building into ADA compliance, making it fully accessible.
- A new skywalk connection to nearby City parking ramps.
- Executive Suites that can be used as semi-private entertainment areas.
- An extended stage and orchestra pit.
- Refurbished seating throughout.
- State-of-the-art acoustics.
- A pre-show reception and lounge area, ideal for public gatherings and private parties and events.
- A new bar and lounge highlighting the legendary 1940's Milk Bar

Financial support of this \$30.5 million project consists of the majority of funding obtained through a financing structure that includes funds of \$6.95 million allocated from the State Legislature, \$2.2 million in tax increment financing, private funds, and federal tax credits. After seven years, Sherman will transfer ownership of the Theatre to the Duluth Playhouse, which has operated in Duluth for 102 years.

“For the past few years the Duluth Playhouse has worked with the City, DEDA and Sherman Associates to make the new NorShor Theatre successful from both an artistic and financial standpoint,” said Duluth Playhouse Board Chair Herb Minke. “Part of that includes raising the final dollars from businesses and individuals, many of whom have already said they’re ready to help. Whether it’s corporate naming rights for parts of the theater to small individual donations, we appreciate and need everyone’s support in the coming months.”

The final step of the overall fundraising, a \$4.5 million capital campaign led by the Duluth Playhouse, will now begin to secure private gifts for enhanced stage lighting, sound systems and other modern equipment that today’s theatergoers expect.

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