

Contact:

Sadie Fisher, Marketing Manager (Second Century Capital Campaign)
sfisher@grandtheater.org
715-842-0988 ext. 248

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Grand Theater Awarded \$1.1 Million Grant from State of Wisconsin for Second Century Capital Project

WAUSAU, WI – The Performing Arts Foundation (PAF) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a **\$1.1 million grant** from the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration Non-State Grants for Local Projects. This significant investment will support the ongoing Second Century Campaign, a comprehensive capital project dedicated to the preservation and modernization of the historic Grand Theater.

The grant arrives at a critical juncture as the organization began an intense construction period on **May 11**, with completion scheduled in time for the 2026/27 Grand Theater season this November. The funding is designated for essential infrastructure improvements, including full modernization of the HVAC and other major building systems, critical roof replacements, and significant accessibility enhancements to ensure the facility meets modern standards for all patrons.

“This \$1.1 million investment from the State of Wisconsin is a testament to The Grand’s vital role as a cultural and economic driver for Central Wisconsin,” said **Sean Wright, Executive Director of The Grand Theater**. “As we approach our 100th anniversary, this funding provides the necessary resources to ensure our facility remains a premier destination for world-class performing arts while maintaining the historic integrity of this community landmark.”

The Second Century Campaign has seen broad support from both public and private sectors, focused on stabilizing the theater’s infrastructure, improving the patron experience, and enhancing technology and amenities for touring productions. With the addition of the state grant, the campaign has now raised **\$15.5 million** of the \$17.5 million project goal.

“We are deeply grateful to the State for recognizing the long-term value of this project,” said **Todd Nicklaus, Second Century Campaign Chairman**. “This grant provides substantial momentum as we enter the final phase of our fundraising efforts. It ensures that the essential structural work—the foundation of our renovation—is fully supported as we begin construction.”

Construction Scope and Timeline

Renovations began on **May 11, 2026**. Major components of the project include:

- **Patron Experience Upgrades:** New theater seating throughout the house with improved ergonomics and modern amenities.
- **Accessibility Enhancements:** Installation of an additional men’s restroom, a family restroom, and expansion of ADA-compliant pathways in the ticket office.
- **Building System Modernizations:** Replacement of end-of-life systems throughout the facility.
- **Structural Restoration:** Interior and exterior restoration work, including a full roof replacement.

Media Opportunity: Leadership from The Grand Theater and the Second Century Campaign are available for interviews to discuss the scope of the project and the impact of this grant on the Central Wisconsin region.

About the Performing Arts Foundation: The Performing Arts Foundation is the nonprofit steward of the historic Grand Theater in Wausau, Wisconsin. Built in 1927, the venue serves over 175,000 guests annually, providing a wide range of entertainment, educational programs and community performances.