SECOND CENTURY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN | THE GRAND THEATER

Press Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wisconsin's Historic Grand Theater Reopens After $17.5 Million Transformation, Ready for Its Second Century

**WAUSAU, Wis. (November 13, 2026) –** The Grand Theater, annually ranked among the world's top theater venues by Pollstar, has reopened its doors after a $17.5 million transformation that restores the 99-year-old landmark for its second century. Completed in under six months of construction, the Second Century Campaign renovation brings new custom seating, restored historic finishes, and expanded accessibility to the heart of downtown Wausau. The theater welcomed its first audience on November 7 with a performance by entertainment legend Wayne Newton.

“We couldn’t be more excited to welcome audiences back to The Grand”, said **Sean Wright, Executive Director**. “This is truly a historic moment that sets the stage for the Second Century of our beloved theater and ensures that we can continue to bring the best in arts and entertainment to Wausau.”

**A historic project, built by a community**

The performing arts have had a home in Wausau for 157 years, back to the opening of the city's Music Hall in 1869. The current theater has stood at 401 4th Street since 1927, and for nearly a century it has served as north central Wisconsin's home for touring Broadway, music, comedy, and family entertainment.

The Second Century Campaign drew support from more than 600 donors, along with a $1.1 million grant from the State of Wisconsin's Non-State Grants for Local Projects program. The project team was led by general contractor Miron Construction and architect DLR Group, joined by 28 subcontractors.

**Highlights of the renovation include:**
- New custom-built auditorium seating by Kotobuki Seating, with cupholders throughout
- Historic decorative painting restored by the artisans of Conrad Schmitt Studios
- A reconfigured balcony and upgraded accessibility throughout the building
- New and expanded restrooms, including a new men's restroom
- A completely renovated Great Hall

**An internationally ranked theater**

The Grand regularly competes with venues in far larger cities. In the live-entertainment trade publication Pollstar's 2025 worldwide ranking of theater venues by ticket sales, The Grand placed 111th in the world, its ninth consecutive year on the list. The Grand sold 73,679 tickets in 2025, its third straight year of record sales.

“For almost a century, The Grand has been supported by outstanding patrons who allow us to compete with theaters all across the world,” said Wright. “The upgrades to the theater and adjoining spaces will allow us to continue to provide memorable experiences for our audiences and artists alike."

**A landmark season ahead**

The reopening launches a 2026–27 season of 38 performances running through June 2027, including:
- **Broadway:** Clue, Hadestown, Riverdance (30th anniversary), The Book of Mormon, Beetlejuice, and A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical
- **Headliners:** Wayne Newton (Nov. 7) and Jay Leno (Jan. 22, 2027)
- **Music:** Blind Boys of Alabama, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and the Vienna Boys Choir
- **Family series:** Cirque Kalabanté, Catapult, and Bill Blagg's Family Magic

Tickets and the full season lineup are available at grandtheater.org.

“A Grand Reopening deserves a season of headlining shows that will draw audiences from across the region and beyond,” said Wright. “We truly have something for everyone to enjoy as they come back to our beautifully restored space.”

**About The Grand Theater:** The Grand Theater is operated by the Performing Arts Foundation (PAF), a nonprofit organization that presents Broadway tours, concerts, comedy, family programming, and arts-in-education performances in downtown Wausau, Wisconsin. Opened in 1927 at 401 4th Street, Wausau, WI 54403, The Grand is an 1160-seat historic proscenium theater.