

DeKalb City Council
200 S. Fourth St.
DeKalb, IL 60115

June 14, 2018

Dear City Council,

The DeKalb Public Library supports the Egyptian Theatre in its efforts to install air conditioning that would allow it to function year-round. The Egyptian is a major cultural attraction for downtown DeKalb, and being able to operate 12 months out of the year would significantly add to the appeal of our city.

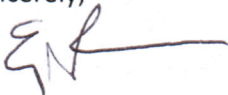
In the past few years the Egyptian has made many meaningful improvements and brought in many performers that appeal to a wide variety of people. New staff and the recent purchase of a new projector allow the Egyptian to schedule and promote more live shows, movies, and events than before. Providing air conditioning would allow them to continue their schedule throughout the summer months when many people are looking for fun and exciting things to do. This would benefit the downtown merchants and restaurants, the library, and the entire DeKalb community as patrons would be perfectly situated to dine, shop, and explore before or after attending an event at the Egyptian.

Although live events and movies are a major draw, the Egyptian is not only a source of entertainment. It also provides a venue for political discourse, community engagement, and acts as a supplemental resource for education and awareness on important issues. The library has been a partner on numerous occasions to screen cultural films and to host panel discussions addressing social issues.

Finally, it is important to consider the historic preservation aspect of adding air conditioning. The library and the Egyptian were built contemporaneously, and both stand as monuments to unique architectural styles that have a prominent place in American history. They also both stand as nearly lone survivors of those styles. DeKalb is one of the few places left in the country to feature architecture of the type visible in the Egyptian and the Haish Memorial Library. The many new developments taking place in downtown DeKalb will provide more opportunities for people to live and work in the heart of town. In light of that, it is more important than ever to retain and revitalize the "jewels in the crown" that provide a sense of place to our beautiful city. The library has been beautifully restored and expanded, and we are now able to offer significant benefits to our patrons. The Egyptian deserves the same treatment, and will, I believe, return the same benefits in increased foot traffic downtown, an improved cultural presence for tourists, and a renewed sense of vigor for a landmark that has made DeKalb residents proud for nearly a century.

The Egyptian Theatre has always been one of my favorite places. To sit in the darkness with stars sparkling overhead and feel the quiet hush of the audience as the curtains open was, and remains, one of the greatest affordable thrills in DeKalb. To see the Egyptian so close to achieving a goal that would boost the DeKalb economy, preserve a historic landmark, and better serve DeKalb residents is encouraging. I encourage the City of DeKalb to allocate the needed funds to provide air conditioning at the Egyptian in order to improve and preserve the beauty of downtown DeKalb.

Sincerely,



Emily Faulkner

Director, DeKalb Public Library