



November 29, 2018

DeKalb City Council
DeKalb Municipal Building
200 S. 4th Street
DeKalb, IL 60115

Dear Members of Council,

This letter is in enthusiastic support of the investment being considered to install air conditioning in the Egyptian Theatre.

A historic theater such as the Egyptian is more than just another culture venue. It defines the character of DeKalb. It is hard to imagine anyone who grew up locally that doesn't have a magical memory of their time there. Visit a retirement home and put that question to the residents and I promise that you'll leave with local pride and tears of joy.

In addition to the obvious improvements to quality of life, there is a major economic return on the City's investment. What's more, the American public understands this.

- We recently published *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2018*, the largest public opinion studies on the arts ever conducted. Not surprisingly, 90 percent of Americans believe that arts facilities such as the Egyptian "improve our quality of life." A more remarkable, yet consistent, finding is that 86 percent believe that arts facilities are "important to local businesses and the local economy."
- The research bears out this last point. Our *Arts & Economic Prosperity in Illinois* study, published last year, demonstrates that the typical arts attendee spends \$35.08 per person, per event, not including the cost of admission on meals, parking, retail, and overnights for out-of-towners. Valuable revenue for local merchants.



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- As if these points weren't compelling enough, our research also shows that the arts provide meaning to our lives: 69 percent of Americans believe the arts "lift me up beyond everyday experiences."
- And, those personal well-being benefits of the arts extend beyond the individual to the community: 72 percent believe "the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity" and 73 percent agree that the arts "helps me understand other cultures better."

There are few opportunities to make an investment of public dollars that provides cultural, economic, and quality of life benefits to your constituents. An investment in the Egyptian Theatre will provide just that.

Sincerely,

Randy Cohen
Vice President of Research & Policy