



Warner Theatre Renovation Economic Impact Analysis

Erie, Pennsylvania

Mr. Hunden conducted an economic, fiscal and employment impact analysis for the Warner Theatre in Erie, Pennsylvania in 2005 after a renovation that restored the historic movie and theater palace to its former glory.

The Warner Theatre is a 2,506-seat theater designed by theater architects Rapp and Rapp and was one of four Art Deco movie palaces built by Warner Brothers in 1931. It was used as a movie theater until 1976, when it was sold to the City of Erie. In the early 1980s, Erie converted the theater to a performing arts center.

In 1992, the Warner Theatre became the highest priority of the local Metro Cultural Planning Committee. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appropriated \$20 million over a ten-year period and the Warner Theatre Preservation Trust raised \$4.5 million, for the renovation. Phase I (new roof, interior restoration, repair of outside facade) was completed in 2002. Phase II (new seating) was completed in 2003.

The renovation of the theater helped spark a revival in events. Today it hosts concerts and Broadway theater performances and is home to the Erie Philharmonic and the Lake Erie Ballet. Phase III (expansion and integration with building at 8th Street and French Street) was completed in March 2007. Phase IV (new entrance, box office, concessions, restrooms) was completed in 2008. The impact of the renovations and new events has resulted in an increase in attendance and economic activity for the city.

Client: City of Erie

Time Period: 2005