

# Presque Isle District Library Receives Grant for the Rogers Theater Marquee Restoration

State Historic Preservation Office  
Awards Grants through Resilient  
Lakeshore Heritage Grant Program



**For Immediate Release**

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**Rogers City, MI.....**The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has awarded \$750,000 in grants to support the preservation of and reinvestment in historic buildings in communities along the Great Lakes, the Michigan Strategic Fund announced. The grants represent awards from SHPO's Resilient Lakeshore Heritage Grant Program, funded through the federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)-- Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program, administered by the National Park Service.

Presque Isle District Library on behalf of the Rogers Theater was awarded \$61,252 to help support the restoration and repair of the original theater marquee retaining its authentic iconic design and functionality.

Planning sessions with the library board and the management team are on-going as this multi-phase theater renovation moves forward. They identified three major phases. Restoration of the north wall and the theater marquee are part of phase I.

"The primary project goal is to ensure that the Rogers Theater remains both functional and operational as a performing arts and cultural center for the community as well as a single screen movie theater for the northeast region of the state", stated Grant Writer/ Project Director, Anne Belanger. "This was a highly competitive grant opportunity that was only available to those communities residing along the shores of the Great Lakes. Upon completion of the marquee project, a key component of the grant is to hire a professional historic preservationist to prepare the documentation necessary to nominate and list the theater in the National Register of Historic Places", Belanger added.

Theater marquees are often the first thing people see when they come downtown. For decades, the Rogers Theater marquee has been slowly deteriorating in functionality and operation along with minor damage to the metal framework. "When bulbs burned out, it was difficult to find replacement bulbs. When the mechanism to operate the chase lights stopped functioning, it remained non-functioning. Now we are enabled to upgrade to energy-efficient LED lighting and have the marquee professionally restored to its authentic grandeur", stated Amber Alexander, Library Director. "This just adds to the efforts of not only maintaining a great library service, but maintaining our only downtown historic theater. While many of the historic buildings were razed during the urban development period, it's our intent as the owner of the Rogers Theater, to restore and preserve this iconic historic building so that generations can enjoy for decades to come", Alexander added.

"We are pleased to have this unique opportunity to directly support investment in the historic places that are so critical to the identity and vitality of our lakeshore communities," said Martha MacFarlane-Faes, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. "These awards will have an immediate impact on the ability of the awardees to continue to be good stewards of these buildings, and we hope that the finished work will also serve as an example of the benefits of historic preservation in our communities, particularly along traditional commercial and civic corridors."

Currently a one-time funding opportunity, SHPO's Lakeshore Heritage Grant Program was established to provide funding to private property owners, nonprofits, and municipalities in communities along the Great Lakes that participate in SHPO's Certified Local Government (CLG) program, MEDC's Michigan Main Street program, or MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities program, all of which recognize the importance of reinvestment in a community's heritage assets as part of ongoing economic development and community planning activities.

Grant awards range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and are being provided in nine communities and along both peninsulas. Funds will support critical building work such as foundation stabilization to roof replacement and masonry repair; and will also support the listing of several of the properties in the National Register of Historic Places, which will not only recognize the historical significance of the properties but also enable property owners to potentially take advantage of additional preservation incentives in the future, such as the state or federal historic preservation tax credit or grants available through SHPO or other entities.

Communities and projects awarded include the following:

City of Alpena, Thunder Bay Theatre; City of Bay City, Restoration of the Masonic Temple; Village of Calumet, Houghton County Land Bank Authority; City of Holland, City Hall Masonry Rehabilitation; City of Mackinac Island, Courthouse Roof Rehabilitation; City of Rogers City, Presque Isle District Library's Rogers Theater Marquee Restoration; City of Sault Ste. Marie, Ashmun Street Storefront Rehabilitation; and City of South Haven, Hotel Nichols Exterior Rehabilitation

Focused on the historic preservation of culturally or archaeologically significant sites throughout the state, Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office's main function is to provide technical assistance to local communities in their efforts to identify, evaluate, designate, interpret, and protect Michigan's historic above-and below-ground resources. To learn more about the State Historic Preservation Office, visit [miplace.org/historic-preservation/](http://miplace.org/historic-preservation/). Details and updates for all projects funded through the Lakeshore Heritage Grant Program will also be available on the website as projects progress.

"This is a specialized skillset to restore theater marquees to their historic authenticity. Thankfully, it is not necessary to remove the marquee from the building's facade to conduct restoration and repairs. All the work will be done on-site. The project will commence in late May/early June while completion of the theater's north wall is planned for late spring.

We are very grateful to our funders for this opportunity to restore the theater's marquee and to see it as it once was some 85 years ago when it lit up the downtown", Belanger concluded.

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Page two of two

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