

Pre-Application for Triumph Funds

Port Theater Art and Cultural Center, Inc. Port St. Joe, Florida

A group of citizens of Gulf County Florida got together in 2011 to organize and become a 501 c 3 not-for-profit organization to restore the Port Theater located in the heart of downtown Port St. Joe, Florida. The theater opened in 1938 but has sat idle since 1964. Hurricanes Opal and Kate battered it and collapsed the roof. Even though it has been damaged, it is still impressive. The US Department of Interior noted the unique art deco style treatment of the façade. In 2003 it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is vital to the economic recovery of Gulf County which has had several major economic downturns to overcome.

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There are no co-applicants but we will be working closely with the National Register of Historic Places to insure genuine historical restoration.

The application is for \$60,000 to paint the interior of the building which includes a general auditorium, a balcony, and an apartment with kitchen. The status analysis by Quina Grundhoefer Architects of Pensacola listed the renovation costs at \$1,214,000.

We have been approved for a \$500,000 grant by a committee of the State of Florida which now goes to the Governor for his final approval. We are currently on a fund raising campaign and searching for other grants to help us reach the \$1,214,000 goal.

The Port Theater is located in the heart of downtown Port St. Joe, Florida, right on the main street of the small town.

The project is basically the restoration and renovation according to historical standards of the original Port Theater in Port St. Joe, Florida. It will be a fully functional auditorium with stage

set up for plays, operas, concerts, business meetings, conferences, workshops, and any other event considered valuable to the community as a whole.

Port St. Joe is in dire economic need. It was long noted as a “mill town,” but the mill closed in November of 2002, and many associated industries like the Arizona Chemical plant closed as well. Over 800 jobs were lost in this small town of 4,000 people. The State of Florida declared Gulf County “A Rural Area of Critical Concern.”

After this devastation, there has been a refocusing of business on the tourism component using the St. Joe Bay, the rivers and lakes, and beach front tourism centered around hotels, restaurants, shopping, fishing, diving, scalloping, and eco-tourism as a whole.

The Port Theater will draw tourists with concerts, plays, art shows, dance recitals, operas, business meetings and conventions, artistic presentations, and lectures on numerous topics germane to the community and to the Florida Panhandle in general.

The goal is to have the entire project completed by July of 2019.