

BECON 6/1/2021

This mornings guests were Sheila Wilson and our speakers for this morning from the Alberta Bair Theater, Jan Dietrich, Executive Director and Ron Yates, a member of the Board of Directors. Incidentally, Ron is also a 22 year member of the Downtown Exchange Club.

Sheila brought various Breakfast Exchange items of John's. If you would like to peruse these items to make them your own, contact Dina.

After a super breakfast of eggs, potatoes and nice, CRISP Bacon, our speakers took over the podium.

The Alberta Bair Theater has been closed for the past two years for the renovation. Originally slated to open in September, 2020, it will now open the 2021 season with Kristen Chenoweth on September 18. Because of COVID, the 1400 seat capacity had been reduced to a social distanced crowd of no more than 250 for a few "testing" performances prior to this opening date. The capacity for the 2021 season will be back to its full 1400.

Some history of the building was presented by Ron. The original Bair family homestead sat on the property, which was sold to the Fox Corporation in 1931 when the Fox Theater was built. The Fox began it's two year renovation in 1985.

The former building structure had dated (1987) technology and many infrastructure problems. The Board of Directors was up against either purchasing land in either the Heights or the West End and an entirely new building at a cost upwards of \$40M or renovating at a cost of \$13.7M. Having decided on renovation, EVERYTHING is new inside the Alberta Bair except for the stage area, although their are new "wings" on either side. The Bair has raised \$13.6M out of the \$13.7M renovation cost in pledges, most of which have been paid.

Tours of the "new" Alberta Bair Theater are available Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon. Call the Alberta Bair office at [256-6052](tel:256-6052) for reservation information.

The Alberta Bair has installed a state of the art sound shell for symphony and choir performances. This sound shell has been "tuned" for optimum sound by a company out of Chicago, so the workers know exactly where to place this shell for each performance. The sound for symphony and choir performances should rival the sound of any theater in the country.

Check out their website, www.albertabairtheater.org to have a look at their very impressive offering of events for the 2021 season. Tickets for performances go on sale July 10 at 8 A.M. at the downtown box office window, 10 A.M. on the website or by phone at 256-6052.