

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

JON BARELA
CABINET SECRETARY

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Contact: Angela Heisel
(505) 629-5148

Angela.Heisel@state.nm.us

New Mexico Economic Development Department and New Mexico MainStreet Host First-Ever Historic Theaters Institute in June

Focus of Institute is to Help Communities Restore and Update Historic Theaters in MainStreet Districts to Serve as Anchors for Economic Growth

Santa Fe, NM - The New Mexico Economic Development Department and New Mexico MainStreet program announce the first-ever [Historic Theaters Institute](#) Friday, June 19 at the historic Shuler Theater in Raton. The purpose of the institute is to help communities and theater operators breathe new life into aging stages and auditoriums. Under the leadership of Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela, MainStreet established the Historic Theaters Initiatives to help restore historic theaters and have them serve as an anchor for economic growth.

"Traveling around New Mexico, I fell in love with these gracious old theaters and knew we could do more to bring them back to their former glory and have them serve as economic drivers. I'm proud that New Mexico is leading the effort to give them new life," said Secretary Barela. "I encourage all to attend this institute to learn more on how historic theaters can bring activity and commerce back to their city centers."

Nationwide, many small town theaters have closed their doors because of the high cost of digital projection equipment. Besides loss of a business anchor in downtown districts, the loss of an entertainment venue has negative impacts on quality of life, retail leakage and community morale.

"The New Mexico MainStreet Historic Theaters Institute is part of an ongoing statewide effort led by the Economic Development Department to rehabilitate historic theaters and install new digital projection and sound equipment required by Hollywood studios to run current features," said Daniel Gutierrez, New Mexico MainStreet deputy director.

Beginning in January 2013, the Economic Development Department has made grants to five publically owned classic theaters throughout New Mexico. These include the Luna Theater in Clayton, the Silco Theater in Silver City, the Lea Theater in Lovington, and the Shuler Theater in Raton and the Lyceum Theater in Clovis.

The Shuler Theater, which is hosting the The New Mexico MainStreet Historic Theaters Institute, is celebrating its centennial this year. The distinctive theater was built as a city hall and auditorium complex and designed by the Rapp and Rapp architectural firm of Trinidad, Colorado, one of the leading firms in the Southwest during the statehood era. A traditional vaudeville house and performing arts stage, the Shuler will install advanced digital projection and sound to offer first run movies in Raton.

The Historic Theaters Institute will offer workshops on innovative operating strategies, including fundraising and programming for the cinema and theater business. Raton will also showcase its highly successful community theater program and honor Bill Fegan, a longtime impresario and producer at the Shuler. Register for the Institute online at: <https://nmshistorictheatersinstitute.eventbrite.com>

For more information on the New Mexico MainStreet Historic Theaters Institute please contact Daniel Gutierrez, 505-827-0151 or daniel.gutierrez2@state.nm.us or find additional resources on our "Historic Movie Houses Initiative" page at the following link: <http://nmmainstreet.org/resources.php>

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