

'Silent Phase' May End By Fall For Theater Drive

Written by Steve Frank
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The silent phase of the fundraising effort to renovate the old Appalachian Theater on King Street in Boone is still silent, and will be for the time being, but by Fall, we may begin hearing noise about finishing the fundraising and starting the renovations of the iconic theater. Chairman of the Appalachian Theater group, John Cooper, told the Boone Kiwanis Club this week that the 650+ seats being designed into the floor plan is perfect for the community—a size in between the seating at the Schaffer Center and Rosen Concert Hall on the ASU campus, and he said it fits community needs in a number of ways, “But it also has the potential for an orchestra pit, it has the potential for a community room, the balcony has tremendous sight lines.” Cooper said that 60 potential user groups have been identified in the community, including such as Mountain Home Music, the Hayes School of Music, Beasley Broadcasting Center, and the ASU athletics department, possibly showing away games live at the theater. Brian Crutchfield of the theater committee told the Kiwanians that one of the more exciting aspects is the community room, with 2000 square feet, large enough to fit quite a number of uses, and just the right size for bringing in income from rentals, “It will be an ideal space to do maybe some conferences, to have breakout space, and to other things that we don’t have that ability to do. We don’t have the Broyhill Inn and Conference Center any more, we don’t have any of the larger hotels like we had before.” And he said, “But we need this for the types of things we can host here and the impact that it will have on bringing people back to Boone for meetings, weddings—all types of events.” John Cooper said that hopes are to end the silent phase of fundraising this fall with hopefully enough money to renovate without debt that has hurt other such projects, with the group then looking at scheduling the estimated two years of renovations.