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### **Historic Birch North Park Theatre Gets a New Marquee**

*Vertical sign adds crowning touch to historic theatre restoration with a design that replicates the original sign*

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – When the historic Birch North Park Theatre lights up on October 8, it will reflect a distinct part of the theatre’s history – with a new vertical “North Park” marquee that is true to the original design. To mark the return of this illustrious piece of the past, a community unveiling ceremony will be held earlier the same day.

The new marquee is part of additional rehabilitation and improvements being made to the historic landmark as part of the North Park Theatre Rehabilitation Project. Funding was made possible through a \$162,918 loan from the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency to theatre owner and manager, Lyric Opera San Diego. Originally built in 1928, the 730-seat theater was restored to its former glory and reopened in October 2005.

“The Birch North Park Theatre is a special part of our City’s history,” said Mayor Sanders. “Its continued operation supports both local arts and the North Park community as a whole.” Mayor Sanders also serves as the Redevelopment Agency’s executive director.

In addition to the new marquee, improvements to the box office fire alarm, bathroom sinks, and installation of a gate at the west alley have been completed. Upgrades to the theatre’s HVAC system and electric meter room, basement waterproofing, replacement of basement and office flooring, and wheelchair lift improvements to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements are currently underway.

“The Birch North Park Theatre is a community gem,” said Councilmember Todd Gloria. “These improvements help preserve and maintain the theatre, reduce operating costs, and enhance the appeal of this beautiful building to patrons and the community alike. We are all proud of the vibrancy Birch North Park Theater brings to the neighborhood.”

Located at 2891 University Avenue, the Birch North Theatre has served as the Lyric Opera’s home since 2005. This year the organization celebrates its 32nd anniversary of bringing accessible, affordable opera and musical theatre productions to San Diego.



The company proudly performs operas and musicals from the European and American tradition, in English, presenting the finest young musical talent available with full orchestra and chorus accompaniment at the Birch North Park Theatre.

"We are very pleased to finally see the face of the North Park Theatre restored to its original glory. This is a moment the community has been waiting for - for a long time," said Leon Natker, general director for Lyric.

In addition to Lyric's regular season performances, the theatre hosts dozens of performing arts and civic events each year for a wide variety of organizations, from schools and churches to dance companies, theatre groups, film clubs and concert promoters. More information about the theatre can be found at [www.birchnorthparktheatre.net/](http://www.birchnorthparktheatre.net/).

The project was completed with funds made available through North Park Redevelopment Project Area 2003 Series A taxable bond proceeds and from existing non-housing tax increment generated in the North Park Redevelopment Project Area. The North Park Theater marquee unveiling will take place October 8, beginning at 11:30 a.m., followed by a theatre tour.

**About the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency**

The City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency created by the City Council in 1958, uses special legal and financial mechanisms to eliminate blight and improve economic and physical conditions in designated areas of the City. The Agency's purview encompasses 17 project areas, study areas and affordable housing. Activities within the project areas are carried out by the City's Redevelopment Department and two public, nonprofit city corporations: Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) and Southeastern Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). The Agency also administers eight Project Area Committees (PAC) that advise the agency on the adoption of redevelopment plans and implementing redevelopment projects. For more information, visit: [www.sandiego.gov/redevelopment-agency/](http://www.sandiego.gov/redevelopment-agency/)

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