
April 1999

Rock River Valley Section
www.ieee.org/regional/section/rock_river/

Event

Sense

The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Inc.

RRV Section Meeting

Coronado Theatre Tour

When

April 29, 1999

Where

Coronado Theatre, 314 N. Main St.,
Rockford, IL

Agenda

6:00 PM Meet
6:15 PM Tour Begins
7:45 PM Tour Ends

Program

The following description of the Coronado Theatre has been taken, in large part, from the publication *A Positive Light - Revitalizing Our Coronado Theatre*, by John E. Shepler, www.execpc.com/~shepler/coronado.html. Photo courtesy of Friends of the Coronado and Nels Akerlund.

Enter the Coronado Theatre and you step into a world of grandeur. The European crystal chandelier in the reception hall sparkles with over a ton of cut glass. The stairways are marble. The walls are gilded plaster, carved with scallop shells and faces of the famous. There is Coronado, the namesake of the theater. Over there is Abe Lincoln, our President from Illinois. The stage is framed in a beautiful proscenium arch, flanked by Italian villages with box seats that hover over the side aisles. It is old world craftsmanship brought to the new world by a generation of skilled immigrants whose touch has been lost with their passing, and whose meticulous hours of labor we could no longer afford even if offered. When it was built in 1927, the Coronado Theatre was a crown jewel of

downtown Rockford. It was known as "Rockford's Wonder Theatre." It was also state of the art in atmospheric theaters of the time. The Frank Adam Electric Co. light board back stage is a rock solid floor to ceiling wall of lights and levers that still function after 70 some years. The fly system for scenery is a tidy collection of ropes and weights routed overhead. Above the audience, electric stars twinkle in the simulated night sky. The Italian villages glow in soft colors from indirect lighting, suggesting twilight in Venice.

Please join us in touring the pre-restoration facility and hearing how they'll push back the far wall so that major New York Productions will have room for their entire productions, instead of having to leave truckfuls of props unloaded. The seats will be upholstered, the plaster cleaned and repaired. Once air conditioning is installed for the first time, they'll be able to offer summer performances. The stage will come alive at least 159 times a year, and the Coronado Theatre will help restore the vigor of a metropolitan downtown at night. There will be an elevator added and access for those physically challenged. The owner's art deco apartment, with its curved walls and large living room, will become a museum to preserve part of the light board, the fly system and other historical treasures, as they are modernized for today's productions. The roof will be made sound again, and the water damage that has left gaping holes in the upper hallways and even the reception hall, will be repaired. The estimated \$14 million will come half from commu-

nity donations, with a matching amount from the city. The painstaking craftsmanship that was bought for \$1.5 million in 1927 is worth 50 times that today, providing you can find people with the skills to recreate the art as it was designed.

Meal

There will be no dinner associated with the tour.

Tour Reservations

Please make your reservations by calling Gloria at 815-226-5247 by Tuesday, April 27, (please include your e-mail address in the information you provide Gloria - thanks).

Note

The meeting is open to the general public. You need not be an IEEE member. Guests are welcome. However, please call to enable us to make appropriate arrangements.



Rock River Valley Section
Established 1947

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An electronic on-line application is available at
www.ieee.org/join.html.

Calendar

April Section Meeting/Tour **Apr 29**
Coronado Theatre

May Section Election/Picnic **May 27**
Sundstrand Park



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