



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information: Jim Peters, President & CEO
(312) 922-1742 – office
(312) 771-2079 – cell

Will Rogers Theatre makes statewide endangered list

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, Springfield, Ill.—The Will Rogers Theatre, 705-715 Monroe St., Charleston (Coles County), was named to Landmarks Illinois’ annual “Ten Most Endangered Historic Places” list, which was announced today at a press conference in the State Capitol.

“This is one of the finest Art Deco theaters in Illinois” said Jim Peters, President of Landmarks Illinois. “Its reopening would be a great plus for downtown Charleston.”

Landmarks Illinois, the state’s leading voice for historic preservation, listed nine other endangered historic properties on its annual list which focuses attention on sites throughout Illinois threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate development.

Since 1938, this theatre has been downtown Charleston’s only movie house. Permanently closed in November 2010, the owner, American Multi-Cinema (AMC), is selling the theater and the adjoining commercial block. Locals fear that due to years of deferred maintenance and a lagging economy, it may be a long time before the building is sold to a capable owner. In the meantime, the building is at risk of further deterioration. The Charleston Preservation Commission has recommended the building for local landmark designation to protect it from future demolition, but the City Council has yet to make a final decision.

-More-

Landmarks Illinois Ten Most Endangered List announced—page two

Background

Since the inception of Landmarks Illinois' "Ten Most" list in 1995, more than a third of the listed properties have been saved, less than a quarter have been demolished, and the rest remain threatened or are being rehabilitated.

This year's list also includes: an 1859 mansion, an historic bridge, a 1920s community center that promoted physical fitness, an 1871 county sheriff's residence and jail, three century-old Catholic churches, a Bertrand Goldberg-designed modern hospital, a former social settlement house, one of the state's most extravagant movie palaces, and a pair of buildings that housed one of the state's most noted artists.

Landmarks Illinois is celebrating its 40th year as a statewide advocacy and education organization. The not-for-profit works with citizens and communities throughout Illinois to preserve, protect and promote historic places through advocacy and education. In addition to the Ten Most Endangered list, the organization also sponsors an annual awards program and a matching grants program for County Courthouses.

The complete "Ten Most" list, including photos of the following sites, is available at www.Landmarks.org through the "Press Room" link.