



Burkhart SIGNSYSTEMS™

Paramount Theatre Marquee

For nearly 78 years, the Paramount Theatre Centre has inspired with its architecture, entertainment, and history. Now the beautiful theater shines as brightly on the outside as the stars do inside. The new four-story double-faced marquee includes open face letters painted inside and out with single stroke yellow neon. The face of the marquee is painted orange with a white border that contains a single row of white LED bulbs. The blade stands 43 feet tall and 86 inches wide, 7 feet taller and 17 inches wider than the original.

Please pass on the following thanks to your Burkhart team of you, Bob Betes, Buck Miller, and the three installers who erected our fabulous vertical sign.

Some time ago, Dr. Phillip R. Shirley D.V.M. had a dream to replace the old vertical blade marquee sign that stood tall along Meridian Street that signaled one of the premiere theatres in downtown Anderson. At one time there were nearly 30 cinemas or theaters in Anderson, the Paramount being the most ornate. It was designed by the noted Austrian architect, John Ebersson, who had design content in 1500 theatres in the late 20's and early 30's. Of those, he designed 155 "atmospheric" theatres – ours with a starred ceiling set with an August constellation". Now, one of only 12 original such structures that are still operational, the Paramount was known as "An acre of seats in a magic city." Scheduled to be torn down in 1989, a group of concerned citizens wanted to save the Paramount from the wrecking ball. They convinced the City fathers to donate the building, with all of its mold and water damage problems, for \$1. They agreed, and the Paramount Heritage Foundation, a 501 C (3) not-for-profit foundation was formed that got the entire community involved to 'save the Paramount.'

Dr. Shirley was part of our restoration committee when we restored the theatre auditorium in 1995. He also donated the monies to install the original horizontal marquee over the entry doors to the Paramount Ballroom. Ever since that time, he has constantly reminded us that we would not be complete with our restoration until we added back the vertical blade marquee. He went to the Embassy Theatre in Ft. Wayne with us to talk to their restoration people a year ago, and he became very excited about renewing his idea of erecting a new vertical blade to replace the original which was removed in 1954.

We pursued the venture with Wagner and you and felt it best to move forward with Burkhart to make his dream come true. All the time, we wanted to make an impact on downtown Anderson by emphasizing our "beacon in downtown Anderson." He wanted it to be 'bigger and better' than the original. He was adamant to have it ready for our Festival of Trees GALA & Auction on November 18

So, on Saturday, this past November 18, Dr. Shirley did the initial lighting of this awesome marquee at 6 pm in front of nearly 350 black tie attendees. We had a New Year's Eve-type count down and the Mayor of Anderson, along with Brian and his wife and Randy Hammel and friend, made a testimonial speech signaling this as a significant moment in the renewal and restoration of our downtown district.

I cannot say enough for the cooperation and workmanship of Bob Betes and his craftsmen who made our dream come true. Everyone in Anderson is aware of or has seen the Blade lit up, and we intend to light it every night till Christmas to celebrate this awe-inspiring addition to our community. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Donald J. Volk, Executive director
Paramount Theatre Centre & Ballroom.



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