



## PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

University of Illinois Springfield Performing Arts Center

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SPRINGFIELD IL – September 17, 2018 – Sunday night’s performance by famed comedian and television star Jay Leno at Sangamon Auditorium brought not only laughs but news. Bryan Rives, new director of UIS Performing Arts Services announced to the 1,500 attendees the creation of the University of Illinois Springfield Performing Arts Center. The UIS Performing Arts Center encompasses a variety of venues and programs including Sangamon Auditorium, the intimate UIS Studio Theatre, the UIS Ticket Office and the UIS Performing Arts Education Connections program.



With the new name comes some other changes including a new web site, UISpac.com, a new name for the active donor support group currently comprised of over 600 households, FRIENDS of UIS Performing Arts Center, and a new logo. The logo features not only the new name but a graphic representation of searchlights. “The searchlights are real,” says Rives. “We now have five powerful search lights on our roof which each put out 1.7 billion beam candlepower and rotate 360 degrees. All made in the USA. Every night when there is a show occurring at one of our venues, the search lights will sweep the night sky as a beacon to the community to come join us. We like to say ‘When you see the lights, come see the show!’”

When asked why the changes were made, Rives said “It was time for a refresh and to celebrate all of the accomplishments our organization has had over the years. Last year we had over 72,000 visitors to our performance venues with over \$2.2 million in ticket sales. We anticipate those numbers to grow as we continue to present more popular entertainers such as Jerry Seinfeld, Gordon Lightfoot and Diana Krall.”

Rives also pointed out Sangamon Auditorium has been in operation for about 37 years, and its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary is quickly approaching in 2021. “UIS is currently in the planning stages for a major facelift of the lobby area and UIS Studio Theatre along with other improvements in store for Sangamon Auditorium,” he said. At Jay Leno’s performance, select donors and supporters of Sangamon Auditorium were treated to a sneak peak of these plans which include a new concession stand for the lobby to be completed by this spring. Donors were also shown architectural concepts for a major redesign of the main lobby including the addition of a new grand staircase to the third-floor landing and a new ticket office. Rives went on to add, “With the recent opening of the UIS Student Union and its versatile ballroom and banquet space, our lobby area no longer serves as the main location for campus gathering and luncheons. This is allowing us to repurpose the space as a dedicated lobby area with amenities patrons expect of a world-class performance facility.”

Plans for the intimate UIS Studio Theatre include all new seating and modernizing the stage equipment. “We also need to renovate all of our dressing rooms,” Rives commented. “They are very antiquated and need to be completely redone. It is important to us that the Studio Theatre becomes a priority in our renovation plans as it is most used by our students including the UIS Theatre program which has now grown to providing a Theatre major degree. We want our students to have access to modern facilities and equipment as they begin their careers.”

Renovations are expected to be funded through a combination of major gifts from individual donors, contributions made to the FRIENDS for UIS Performing Arts Center annual fund drive, and funds derived from a current facility fee collected on all paid tickets which goes into a fund for capital maintenance and improvement projects.

*(Renovation Drawings for lobby, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor landing and concession stand)*



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