

## PRESS RELEASE

The Mabel Tainter Theater  
Contact: Lucas Chase, Executive Director  
715-348-7412 | [director@mabeltainter.org](mailto:director@mabeltainter.org)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **THE MABEL STEPS IT UP**

*Theater launches project to renovate grand staircase and portions of building.*

MENOMONIE, WI, January 19 – Menomonie’s Historic Mabel Tainter Theater is already thinking spring and looking forward to a major renovation project that will repair and replace the double staircase on the building’s historic main entrance at 205 Main Street.

After enduring 134 years of Wisconsin weather extremes, the staircase that leads to the ornate grand entrance of the theater is in need of replacement. Made from Indiana Limestone blocks weighing up to 3,000 lbs, the stair treads and landings are supported by the same Dunnville sandstone used in the rest of the building’s exterior. Water is the primary cause of the staircase’s deterioration. Due to settling of the stairs, water no longer properly drains away from the building, instead pooling and absorbing into the stone stairs and walls. This has caused severe erosion to the treads and subsequent damage to the historic bathrooms located beneath the grand entrance on the building’s lower level.

“We love The Mabel because of its history and its grandeur,” says Lucas Chase, Executive Director of The Mabel. “Unfortunately, the history and grandeur of the building also mean that these kinds of repairs are much more complicated and costly than your average project.”

The organization has contracted with the Building Restoration Corporation of Roseville, MN to complete the historic restoration of the staircase, which is expected to cost approximately \$300,000. The total cost of the project also includes repairs to the currently-closed lower level historic bathrooms so they can be reopened for use. The project is expected to begin in April, 2024 and be completed in time for the September kickoff of the 2024-2025 performance season.

The Mabel is accepting donations to help fund this and future building maintenance. Donations of all levels are accepted. Donors who make a major gift commitment of \$15,000, payable over the next three years, will be recognized with a plaque listing on the front of The Mabel when the restoration is completed. Visit <https://www.mabeltainter.org/stepitup> for more information on how to support the project.

“It costs around \$1,000 per day just to keep our building heated and the lights on, so when these extra needs arise, we really do depend on the generosity of donors to help cover those expenses. That support allows us to continue The Mabel Tainter’s legacy as a thriving center for art, entertainment, and community,” said Chase. “With a proper restoration we hopefully won’t need to revisit this project for another 100+ years.”

Questions on giving to the front stair project can be directed to Lucas Chase, Executive Director, or Dustin Olson, Development Officer – [development@mabeltainter.org](mailto:development@mabeltainter.org).

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## **ABOUT THE MABEL TAITER**

The Mabel Tainter is a tax-exempt non-profit organization that strives to strengthen and connect the Menomonie community by engaging people in the arts. It offers a full performing arts season, outreach programming, and an annual Fine Arts and Crafts Fair. This nonprofit owns and operates the historic facility formerly known as the Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater at 205 Main Street, Menomonie WI.

The Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater was constructed in 1889 as a tribute to Mabel Tainter, a young woman who loved music and the arts. The facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a charter member of the League of Historic American Theatres, and is a designated Wisconsin Historical Marker Site. It is a premier example of a restored vintage American theater and is considered by the Theatre Historical Society of America as one of the top 10 historic theaters in the United States.

The Mabel Tainter is host to more than 90 local and nationally-touring live music and theater performances and welcomes more than 20,000 visitors annually. Free historic tours of the building are available each week between 12-3 pm on Fridays and Saturdays. Other dates/times can be arranged by appointment.