

# **Gov. Pritzker Announces \$119 Million Investment In Western Illinois University**

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MACOMB – Governor JB Pritzker today joined state and local officials to announce a \$119 million investment for the construction of a Center for Performing Arts (CPA) at Western Illinois University. The funding is made possible by the Governor’s historic bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan. The new Center for Performing Arts will support the academic mission and programs in the WIU College of Fine Arts and Communication and serve as a cultural and performing arts destination for the campus community, the City of Macomb, and the entire western Illinois region.

“For nearly 50 years, Western Illinois waited for state government to fund a new facility, while unmet opportunities piled up and potential innovation fell by the wayside,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Today, I am proud to announce an investment of \$119 million for a new, best-in-class Center for Performing Arts here at Western Illinois University. It’s projects like these that prove Illinois is no longer defined by its fiscal woes, but by its determination to invest in its people. That’s what has always made this the greatest state in the nation: our people. And Western Illinois University is on the forefront of our renaissance as a state.”

Once completed, the 100,000-square-foot building will boast classrooms, offices, practice rooms, studios, and significant performance space to support the interdisciplinary efforts of Western Illinois University students. The Great Hall, an 850-seat Proscenium Theatre, will provide state-of-the-art performance space for music, theatre, and dance productions, as well as regional and national touring performances. The smaller Black Box Theatre will provide a more intimate space for campus productions. Construction is slated to begin in 2022.

"We appreciate Governor J.B. Pritzker, Deputy Governor for Education Martin Torres, the General Assembly, and the Capital Development Board for continuing to move forward on this much-anticipated, iconic Center for Performing Arts," said Western Illinois University President, Guiyou Huang. "We look forward to watching the building construction progress and anxiously await the day we can celebrate its grand opening. The Center for Performing Arts will enhance Western's academic distinction and provide our region with state-of-the-art music, dance, and theatre facilities. This is a true investment for WIU and west-central Illinois. Once again, we extend our gratitude to the Governor, the CDB, our legislators, businesses, alumni, friends, and donors for their dedication to this project."

“The WIU Center for Performing Arts will be a state-of-the-art facility for our students and community,” said State Rep. Norine Hammond (R-Macomb). “It will provide not only a top-notch performance space for music, theatre and the arts, but it will also serve as an economic engine for our region, bringing touring groups and patrons of the arts to Macomb. This project has been a long time coming and I am thrilled that it is finally coming to fruition. I am excited to be here today for the groundbreaking of this outstanding new facility and I want to thank everyone who has put so much time and effort into seeing this Center become a reality.”

“The Western Illinois University Center for Performing Arts has been a dream in the making for many years,” said State Senator Jil Tracy (R-Quincy). “This massive project has been a long time coming, and it reflects the efforts of a number of government officials, local leaders and private citizens. And it will be worth the wait. The new state-of-the art facilities will enhance performing arts education programs and studies in all

academic disciplines, as well as boost entertainment and educational opportunities for the residents of west central Illinois and beyond.”

“The CPA, the first state-funded building for WIU since 1974, will allow the College of Fine Arts and Communication (COFAC) to consolidate into a more centralized location and provide academic and performance opportunities that rival the excellence of Western's programs,” said COFAC Dean, Billy Clow.

“As an early advocate for this badly needed facility for west-central Illinois and the University, I want to thank Governor Pritzker and his Rebuild Illinois program for FINALLY making it a reality. The fifth governor was the charm!” said former State Senator and WIU Alumni President, Kirk Dillard.

The Capital Development Board (CDB) will oversee the project's design and construction in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated projects.

“The Illinois Capital Development Board is eager to begin a partnership with Western Illinois University on this robust performing arts facility,” said Capital Development Board Executive Director, Jim Underwood. “The new facility will provide economic opportunities for west-central Illinois and an elevated learning experience at one of Illinois’ premier public universities.”

Governor Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan provides essential funding to support the revitalization and improvement of Illinois roadways, state facilities, universities, bridges, and railways over a six-year period. The initiative seeks to address critical infrastructure needs and create economic opportunities across the state.