

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 656

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize the Plaza Theatre in El Paso, Texas, which was constructed in 1930 and is an exceptional, intact example of an atmospheric movie palace in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Embodying the distinctive, illusion-producing characteristics of atmospheric movie theater architecture during this time period, the theater meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places for status deemed Nationally Significant; and

WHEREAS, Located in a major metropolitan center on the United States-Mexico border and articulated in a Spanish Colonial Revival style, the Plaza Theatre also embodies the unique binational, bicultural, and bilingual identity of the borderlands region of the Southwest; and

WHEREAS, Constructed at the apex of a period of tremendous economic and population growth in the Southwest, the theater is associated with broad patterns in the history of this part of the country, specifically the development of El Paso as an important commercial and cultural center for the region and the blending of Anglo and Hispanic peoples and cultures that has characterized the borderlands region over the history of its settlement; and

WHEREAS, Among the many distinctions touted on opening night, September 12, 1930, the Plaza was the largest movie theater west of Dallas; it had the first "refrigerated" drinking water system in a public building in the United States; it was one of only six theaters in the Southwest to feature a Brenograph, a

machine that could project stationary or moving color effects onto the screen or across the proscenium; it was the first to employ a "telecheck" system, an in-house communication system linking the box office to the ushers at various levels in the auditorium; and its organ, a Balaban III was one of only six produced by the Wurlitzer Company and is one of only two that still exist today; and

WHEREAS, The significance of the Plaza Theatre is derived from its outstanding architectural value as an intact atmospheric movie palace, combined inextricably with its direct association with the events of a key period of development in the Southwestern region of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, hereby recognize the Plaza Theatre in El Paso, Texas, as a Treasure of Texas History within the context of movie theater architecture and development in the United States.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 22, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate