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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Denis Theatre Foundation Making Steady Progress Towards Challenge Grant Issued in March

**PITTSBURGH, PA, March 26, 2015** – The Denis Theatre Foundation is pleased to announce that \$75,450 has been raised in cash and pledges, 26% towards its goal of a \$290,000 Challenge issued in March.

“Thanks to loyal donors and the renewed excitement about our film and arts center, we are on track to meet the Challenge issued to us by an anonymous donor. To date, \$75,450 of the \$290,000 is raised in cash and pledges. It is gratifying and energizing to talk with community members about the ways in which the Denis will enrich the quality of life in our region”, states Denis Theatre Foundation Board Fundraising Chair, Dr. Betty Jo Hirschfield Louik. “We are progressing on design plans and business planning, informed by benchmarking other successful independent theaters in the nation. It’s full speed ahead. Our grassroots project is taking shape and taking off.”

Program Committee Chair Elaine Wertheim adds, “Also in the past month, we received two grants for our film programs “Meet Me at the Movies” and “Reel to Real”. The investment of \$5,000 from PNC Charitable Trust and \$7,500 from the Pittsburgh Foundation is a testament to the magic of film and the impact of the arts on the community. We are so grateful for this support.”

The Denis Theatre Foundation plans to show independent and foreign films and documentaries in its three-screen space. The designs call for two auditoriums, and a Learning Center/Screening room which will be suitable for diverse uses, including private screenings, film discussion groups, youth education and receptions. The Denis will also have a lounge and community gathering space in an area that draws in the dynamism of the bustling street and will feature regional art year-round. Artists will be considered valuable partners and will participate to some degree in community programming.

“It's important for people to think of the Denis as a regional project, with its audience coming from the entire Pittsburgh region and beyond. Like many other donors, I do not live in Mt. Lebanon, but I enthusiastically supported Concession Naming Rights in honor of my late husband, Brian Hall,” adds Ellie Hall, Board Member and lead individual donor to the project. “This challenge will spur the investment of additional donors with an interest in enhancing the cultural fabric of our region. There is power in a challenge grant and we will leverage that power.”

To date, \$2.2M has been raised towards the building acquisition and renovation project, revealing the breadth of community, foundation and government support for the mission. The current designs call for a complete reinstallation of all health, life and safety features, including accessibility improvements, heating, ventilation and electrical. The task is to upgrade a building designed in the 1930s to meet the needs and demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

Now in development, the architectural designs by Balog, Steines, Hendricks & Manchester Architects (BSHM), offer space that can include movies and film festivals, but will also accommodate author and lecture series as well as small-scale musical performances. The Denis is committed to access for all, and will offer ways for those with physical impairments to utilize the space and enjoy the facility. The possibilities are endless, and the theatre will be a cultural touchstone that helps to drive economic development on the Main Street. The Board of Directors expect to gain formal bids by year-end and will then assess cash flow needs to begin the work.

### **About The Denis Theatre Foundation**

The Denis Theatre Foundation is a non-profit that was formed in 2007 to restore and renovate the theatre. By 2010, enough funds had been raised to finance the purchase of the property. During the renovation campaign, The Denis is offering ongoing film programs, including *Meet Me at the Movies*, for people with dementia, their families and caregivers, a project that has garnered support of three local senior residential facilities. It also facilitates *Reel to Real*, discussions for film lovers that includes insight and guided discussions with a local film expert.

To learn more about the mission, renovation project, current programs or how to contribute, visit [www.denistheatre.org](http://www.denistheatre.org).

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