

# PHOENIX TO HAVE NEW \$500,000 THEATER

## Start Work In 10 Days On Modern Play House

Rickards And Nace An-  
nounce Building Plans  
For Second Avenue  
And Adams Street

TO SEAT 2,000

New Theater To Be  
Equipped For Large  
Road Productions, Pic-  
tures And Vaudeville

**A**UGMENTING the rapid and almost unparalleled development of Phoenix' downtown business district, definite announcement that a magnificent new 2,000-seat theater, representing an investment of approximately \$500,000, will be erected here immediately, was made yesterday by Rickards and Nace. The announcement stated also that other Phoenix theaters controlled by the firm will be remodeled to meet changing conditions and the increase in population.

Actual construction, according to Harry L. Nace, firm member, will start within the next 10 days and work will be expedited to the utmost in the hope that the new theater will be completed and ready for operation by December 1, 1927.

As originally announced in The Republican, the new playhouse will occupy the southwest corner of Second avenue and Adams street. This improvement of one of the most important and valuable downtown corners brings the total of recent large building and real estate transactions to a sum unprecedented in the history of Phoenix and is Rickards and Nace's contribution to a city which they believe will soon have a population of 100,000.

The original site acquired by Rickards and Nace some time ago from the Phoenix Elks lodge has been enlarged to include the adjoining 50 feet, purchased recently from Dr. Charles Palmer. The property now comprises a frontage of 150 feet on West Adams street and 137½ feet on North Second avenue, giving the new playhouse an area extending from the corner to the alley on Second avenue and from the corner to the Melcer property on Adams street.

### Three Story Structure

The new building, Mr. Nace stated, will be of the class "A" type, strictly fireproof and built of reinforced concrete and brick throughout. Present plans call for the erection of a three-story building, to house not only the new theater and offices, but modern storerooms and business establishments on the ground floor along both streets. Foundations for an eight-story building have been provided and additional stories will be added as local conditions warrant, the announcement said. Excavation in a large measure has already been done and this will aid materially in completing the building by the date contemplated.

The new theater will embody the finest features of modern theaters in the East and on the Pacific coast. The lower floor will have a seating capacity of about 1,700 seats and the balcony, to include the latest ideas in loges, will seat approximately 300.

"Every convenience will be included for the comfort of the public," Mr. Nace said yesterday. "Spacious seats of the most ap-

proved design will be used, so placed that the last word in comfort, accessibility and unobstructed vision will be assured. Large rest and lounging rooms have also been provided, as well as promenade and mezzanine facilities."

### Elaborate Equipment

"The furnishing and general investiture will be the best. The new playhouse is planned to care for the theatrical needs of this city for some time to come and every care toward this end will be exercised. Special attention will be paid to the lighting of the new amusement temple. Elaborate color schemes and effects have been provided and all illumination will be indirect. The same detail will be followed in ornamental illumination on the outside of the building.

"The auditorium will be cooled in summer by the latest, improved refrigeration process, forcing dry, purified air into the building with a rapidity assuring a complete change of atmosphere every minute or so. The theater will be heated by purified, warm air.

"The theater will be equipped with the largest and most complete stage in the west, provisions having been made for handling any and all types of attractions that may visit this city in the future. The policy of the institution will be to feature motion pictures, vaudeville and road attractions. The Western Association acts, now visiting Phoenix, will continue to furnish the vaudeville entertainment. This circuit is owned and controlled by the Orpheum and when the growth of the city makes it possible, the complete Orpheum program will be offered at the new theater.

"As part of the equipment a mammoth pipe organ will be installed, augmented by a thematic orchestra."

### Improve Other Houses

Coincident with the announcement of the new theater, Mr. Nace also outlined a policy of proposed improvements of their other holdings in Phoenix.

"Opening of the new playhouse," he said, "will necessitate a rearrangement of present schedule and policies of the various houses here. The Rialto will be completely redecorated and revamped to become the home of feature motion pictures. The Strand will be remodeled and refurbished so that it will be brought up to the standard of the modern motion picture theater.

"The Columbia will undergo a complete change of policy in the new scheme of local theatricals. This theater will be refurbished and the stage so equipped that presentations and prologues will be a regular fare. It will continue as the home of long-run pictures and will be equipped with a thematic orchestra."

The firm of Rickards & Nace is composed of Joe E. Rickards and Harry L. Nace. Entering the local

amusement field individually in rather modest fashion several years ago, the merging of their interests into the present firm laid the foundation of what has become one of the most important of Phoenix business institutions. Opening of the new theater will bring to 14 the total of amusement houses controlled by Rickards & Nace, or in which they are interested. Seven of these houses are located in Phoenix.

### Statewide Theater Group

The local theaters include the Rialto with 1,200 seats; the Strand, with a capacity of 1,000; the Columbia, with another 1,000 seats; the Apache, with 800 seats; the Ramona with 1,000 and the Amuzu with an additional 500. With the 2,000 seats available in the new theater, the total will be raised to 7,500.

Outside of Phoenix the interests of Rickards and Nace include the Nile and Majestic theaters in Mesa, the Rialto and Opera House in Tucson, the Yuma theater in Yuma and the new Rialto in Winslow. Several other locations in Arizona are being considered by the firm and announcements of still further expansions may be expected shortly, according to Mr. Nace.

A brief, interesting history of the activities of Rickards and Nace and an outline of the existing situation with reference to road shows was given yesterday by Mr. Nace making his announcement.

"The passing of the old Lamara theater," he said, "formerly located on a site now occupied by a part of the First National Bank building, and abandonment of the old Hippodrome, where Army and Navy store is located, was simultaneous with erection of the Strand, The Ramona and the Amuzu theaters, or next acquisitions, were designed to care for the needs of the eastern part of Phoenix. The Rialto came next and expansion into the other towns of the state followed logically as the business prospered.

### Held Road Show Franchise

"At the present time Rickards and Nace furnish employment to over 200 people, supporting a payroll in excess of \$175,000 annually, exclusive of Riverside park, which operates during the summer months and employs 65 persons. This swells the annual payroll of the firm to about \$200,000.

"The road show franchise is vested in our firm and definite announcement is made that in the future as in the past, every possible attraction will be brought to this city. The supply of road shows has been seriously reduced through the rapid growth of Los Angeles and Hollywood as production centers. It is a known fact that as many shows are organized in the coats cities as in New York. Playing or road shows anywhere on the trip from east and west has always been contingent on the shows moving from the east through to the Pacific coast. Naturally, with cost productions in the ascendancy, the cross-country trip has been abandoned by many of the former traveling organizations."