

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy, Speaker Coughlin, Mayor Busch Highlight New Jersey Economic Development Authority Resources to Support Arts and Culture

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METUCHEN – Governor Murphy today joined Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin and Mayor Jonathan Busch to tour the historic Forum Theatre in Metuchen, highlighting the resources available to support the arts and New Jersey's downtowns.

"Visiting Metuchen's Forum Theatre today served as a reminder of the venue's immense potential," **said Governor Murphy**. "New Jersey's cultural hubs – from our theaters to our music venues – bring people together in support of artistic expression and creativity. We look forward to working through the Economic Development Authority to revitalize community treasures across New Jersey, and to watching the Metuchen Arts District continue to take shape over the coming months."

A \$3.5 million grant given to Metuchen from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund facilitated the purchase of the Forum Theatre in 2019. The grant also aids the advancement of an arts and culture hub in Middlesex County: the Metuchen Arts District. The Forum Theatre, located on Main Street, would serve the community as a cornerstone of Metuchen's downtown and of the Metuchen Arts District.

Governor Murphy signed P.L.2023, c.197 in December of 2023, establishing the Cultural Arts Incentive Program under the New Jersey Economic Development Authority. The program will provide tax credits to support eligible applicants' larger-scale projects, including the rehabilitation of theaters, museums, galleries, libraries, performing arts centers, and related efforts to revitalize New Jersey's downtowns.

The program will award tax credits to cover capital and operating costs of cultural arts institutions seeking to construct or rehabilitate facilities engaged in the cultural, educational, or artistic enrichment of the people of this state. Uplifting these areas is an important investment in the richness of New Jersey's communities and local economies, building upon the Murphy Administration's efforts to expand access to the arts and support small and family-owned businesses. Recipients of these tax credits will be more equipped to improve and expand their community programming, bringing residents together and ensuring New Jersey remains one of the best states to live, work, and raise a family.

"From early on in his administration, Governor Murphy has prioritized developing programs that support New Jersey's arts and culture community and the revitalization of downtowns. Entertainment venues across the state are part of the fabric that make up New Jersey's rich cultural diversity," **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "Our cultural hubs are critical to our state's job market and overall economy and I look forward to continuing to work with Governor Murphy, Speaker Coughlin, and the entire Legislature on creating programs that will help strengthen and restore community assets."

"Communities across New Jersey now have resources to revitalize their art and cultural institutions and reap the economic and cultural benefits. I was proud to sponsor legislation to expand these opportunities," **said Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin**. "Metuchen's Forum Theatre is a prime example of a renewed local institution that will benefit an entire region. My thanks to Governor Murphy for his partnership and to EDA CEO Tim Sullivan for his work in implementation so we can see more success stories across the state."

"We all recognize that revitalizing the Forum Theatre would provide an overwhelming boost to the Borough's flourishing arts scene," **said Metuchen Mayor Jonathan Busch**. "Investment opportunities like these are catalysts for broader economic development in communities throughout New Jersey because they help attract visitors and businesses to places like Metuchen."

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