

What We Do: Save Century 2 is a group of citizens working together to ensure our icon remains a part of the Wichita, KS skyline and has a vibrant future in our community.

Where We've Been: Century II opened on January 11, 1969 at a cost to the city of \$12.5 million. Replacing The Forum on the riverfront, the new performing arts and convention center was built to coincide with Wichita's centennial in 1970. Designed by the firm John M. Hickman and Associates, the building features 200,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space including 22 meeting rooms and three separate performance halls. In 1986, Bob Brown Hall was completed, connecting the structure to an addition 93,000 sq. ft. of convention space. In 1997, the Hyatt Regency Wichita was built adjoining the center.

Today, Century II is home to Music Theater Wichita, Wichita Grand Opera, Wichita Symphony Orchestra and Wichita Theater Organ as well as several small community groups. The facility also hosts numerous conventions, trade shows, national performing arts shows and public exhibits. Over its 48-year history, performances here have ranged from Frank Sinatra to Johnny Cash, Rodney Dangerfield to Kevin Hart, "Cats" to "Les Miserables", gun shows to the Miss USA Pageant. Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump has all appeared at one time or another on a Century II stage.

Plans in 2009 to modernize Century II with \$22 million in Capital Improvement Plans were shelved by City Hall and the building has sat, neglected, for over 10 years. If City Hall cannot take care of the current buildings it owns, why should more be built? Can citizens afford the new buildings with a new water plan coming, and the need for a new sewer in our city's future?

Where We're At: Photos from Wichita's past reveal many marvelous works of architecture that no longer exist. The Miller Theater Allis Hotel, historic Riverside homes, and others are gone forever. Why? Because previous generations lacked the foresight to preserve these iconic structures. Yet our city may be on the verge of committing the same mistake again.

For years there have been studies conducted on what could be done with Century II. The most recent round of discussions that will impact the future of our performing arts center now includes a large part of the East Bank of the Arkansas River from the river to Main Street and Douglas Avenue to Kellogg. While we are excited about increased vitality of Wichita's downtown, of the four current proposed design scenarios, only ONE includes saving Century II. We believe the only scenarios worth considering should include keeping Century II.

Cost Advantage-

By saving Century II and remodeling the interior we can save at least \$200 million dollars, and with the right imagination, have a showplace for the nation. By any measure the cost to demolish and replace this structure would not only be far

greater in terms of money, but also in terms of the historic and cultural loss to Wichita.

Iconic Architecture-

Century II's distinctive blue dome has served as a landmark on Wichita's skyline for nearly 50 years and holds a sentimental attachment for many in our community. An example of the "Unisonian" style of architecture, the Century II structure was designed by John M. Hickman and Roy K. Verenhorst, who were both apprentices of Frank Lloyd Wright. Their firm's designs can be seen in buildings throughout the area including several Wichita elementary schools as well as WSU's Ablah Library.

Where We're Going: A group of Century II supporters is working to ensure this Wichita icon remains in our skyline and open to the community for generations to come. We are in the process of petitioning the National Registrar of Historic Places to recognize Century II as a historic landmark. Gaining this designation will allow application of Historic tax credits and grants, which can be used for renovations that honor the structure, yet refresh it for the future. We are also exploring options for repurposing the facility if new performing arts facilities are built for the current tenants in the future.

You can help our efforts by [signing our petition](#), [buying a t-shirt](#), [posting a yard sign](#), or [attending meetings and organizing with us](#). You can email us at mcrb@ksadvocates.com as well as providing feedback to those making recommendations to city leaders.