

LOCAL BUSINESS



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

John and Cindy Hooton, owners of Stargazers Theatre and Event Center, plan to sell the dome-shaped building east of downtown Colorado Springs and move their business into a larger building with room for a full kitchen and dance floor, among other amenities.

Stargazers to expand its universe

BY RICH LADEN
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The Stargazers Theatre and Event Center, a Colorado Springs concert and entertainment venue known as much for its cozy setting as its eye-catching domed shape, is for sale.

Owners John and Cindy Hooton say they're looking for a larger

venue to double or triple the 500 seats they have at Stargazers, on the southwest corner of Pikes Peak Avenue and Parkside Drive.

The Hootons couldn't be reached for comment, but they posted the news on Facebook, and their real estate agent listed the property on his website. The Hootons, who have

owned the property since 2008, will continue to operate the center while they look for new digs.

"After five years and almost 1,000 events under Stargazers dome, we are looking for a larger space where we can incorporate a larger venue of 1,000 to 1,500 seats and a small and more intimate venue," according to

the Hootons' Facebook post. "We also want this new space to have room for dance floors, a full kitchen and catering operation, warehouse space for a local and growing sound company, a recording studio, classroom space for sound engineering

SEE FOR SALE • PAGE 2

FOR SALE

FROM PAGE 1

training, retail space for a music store and a few other entertainment and music related businesses.”

The sale price is \$2 million for the 16,200-square-foot building, its 2.37 acres and more than 250-space parking lot, according to a listing by Jerry Trent of Re/Max Properties. The sale doesn't include the Stargazers business or name.

The building was constructed in 1969 as the home of the UA Cinema 150 Cinerama Theatre, which operated for about 15 years. The building was designed by San Francisco-area architect Vincent G. Rainey, the Stargazers' website says; Rainey was known for similar theater designs in California, according to several online postings.

By the 1980s, the building had become a church and later operated as a night-



CHRISTIAN MURDOCK, THE GAZETTE

club and a music hall.

El Paso County land records show the Hootons — who also own the 24-cabin Timber Lodge near Manitou Springs — paid \$670,000 for the building in April 2008.

Since then, the Hootons have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new roof, a fire sprinkler system, new lighting, electrical, heating, air conditioning and plumbing systems and a new sound system, among other upgrades, Trent said.

The venue includes a stage, theater screen, seat-

ing and concession area. In addition to concerts and film screenings, it's used for corporate seminars, banquets, fundraisers and other events.

“They wanted to do a music venue, a concert place, and it fit exactly what they'd been looking for,” Trent said. “It's cool on the inside. They've done a really nice job with it. The architectural appeal of the building is astronomical. It's just beautiful.”

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Elephant Revival plays Stargazers Theatre and Event Center in December 2011. Its owners are seeking a larger venue.