



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution recognizing the Ryman Auditorium - "The Mother Church of Country Music" - and its 130 years as Music City's most famous and respected concert venue.

WHEREAS, on May 10, 1885, Captain Thomas G. Ryman attended the Reverend Sam Jones tent revival held in Nashville and, after being converted, promised Rev. Jones he would build a tabernacle for him and others which could hold thousands indoors; and

WHEREAS, in 1892, Captain Ryman opened the Union Gospel Tabernacle on Summer Street (now Rep. John Lewis Way) -- a massive brick building which was the largest auditorium south of the Ohio River and was open to all people to hear the top ministers and speakers of the day; and

WHEREAS, during Captain Ryman's funeral on Christmas Day 1904, Rev. Jones, at the end of his eulogy, asked the four thousand people in attendance who wished the name of the tabernacle be changed to the Ryman Auditorium to stand. Everyone rose from the wooden pews and the building has been known as the Ryman Auditorium ever since; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1904 and until her retirement as General Manager in 1955, Lula Naff booked some of the most famous speakers and acts of the day at the Ryman, including President Teddy Roosevelt, President William H. Taft, Caruso, John McCormack, Bob Hope, Nat King Cole, Houdini, Will Rogers, Bessie Smith, Helen Keller, and hundreds of other famous acts and performances; and

WHEREAS, on June 5, 1943, the world's oldest and most famous radio show, the Grand Ole Opry, began a 31-year run at the Ryman. Country music fans from across the globe saw Opry members Hank Williams, Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, George Jones, Charley Pride, Little Jimmy Dickens, Loretta Lynn, and many others on the Ryman stage; and

WHEREAS, when the Opry moved to its new home in 1974, the Ryman was at risk of being torn down by its previous owner, but musicians, politicians, and preservation-minded Nashvillians all spoke out to save the historic building, and

WHEREAS, from 1974 to 1994, the Ryman sat empty, except for daily tours and a few tapings; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, the Ryman received a major restoration of 8.5 million dollars. The renovation added air-conditioning, restored the building, created a new backstage area and dressing rooms, and a large addition that held a new lobby with restrooms, offices and a retail shop. That year, the Ryman re-opened as a music venue and daytime tourist attraction, and

WHEREAS, Ryman Hospitality Properties Chairman and CEO Colin Reed announced on the Ryman stage in 2014 that, due to the popularity of the venue and downtown Nashville, the Ryman would receive a 14 million dollar renovation. Reed said the 1994 lobby and retail area would be remodeled and expanded to improve the visitors' experience, the tour product would be reimagined and would include a new show telling the Ryman's history called "The Soul of Nashville," and that concession areas, bathrooms and retail shop would be improved and expanded, and

WHEREAS, the venue is most famous for being a home for country music, its legacy has been defined by

showcasing one of the most expansive lists of diverse performers ranging from jazz, pop and bluegrass to rock and roll, classical, and hip hop. From its very beginning, the Ryman has been a stage to just about every type of music and every type of performer, and

WHEREAS, since the 19th century, the Ryman has been known for its extraordinary acoustics which famous musicians and fans still marvel at today; and

WHEREAS, the Ryman has been used for taping many popular television shows and movies, including “The Johnny Cash Show,” “Coal Miner’s Daughter,” “American Idol,” and the ABC/CMT show “Nashville”; and

WHEREAS, the Ryman Auditorium has been named “Theater of the Year” 13 times by Pollstar; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize the Ryman Auditorium for its 130-year history in Nashville.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVISON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the Ryman Auditorium, “The Mother Church of Country Music,” and its 130 years in Nashville as Music City’s most famous and respected music venue, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors to Nashville each year.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Council Office is directed to prepare a copy of this Resolution to be presented to Gary Levy, General Manager of Ryman Auditorium.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson Country requiring it.