

## Uptown lights downtown

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Large crowd

attends event

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News Editor

Like a piece of Americana

brought back to life, downtown

Grand Prairie got its first look

at the restored exterior of The

Uptown Theater Sept. 15.

There was a palpable air of

excitement in the crowd as they

counted down to the building's

first relighting in years. And as

"one" faded from the air, the

"ooohs" replaced it and the

night was brightened by pulsing

and chasing neon casting a pink

and white cast on the crowd of a

couple hundred people there to

share in the moment.

"It brought tears to my eyes,"

former owner Donna Easterling

said.

Easterling attended the event

with her sister Pat Watson and

some of the theater's original

staff. She said she was approached

by many people who

said they remembered The

Uptown in its heyday.



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"What I am amazed at is the turnout. It's great to see all of the people here," Easterling said.

It seemed that the crowd drew as much praise from the assembled speakers at the event as the lights.

"I don't think I have seen this many people here since President Kennedy was running for election in 1960," Mayor Charles England said, referring to a campaign stop in the city, right in front of The Uptown.

England said that renovating The Uptown to its former glory was only the start of many moves to bring more people back to the downtown area.

"This is a big night for Grand Prairie," he said. "Our dream as a council is to revitalize downtown Grand Prairie and this is a jumpstart for that."

And later he added, "There will be a lot of development downtown. When you build this kind of facility and bring this many people downtown, I think we will see a great result."

Uptown Theater Manager

Elsbeth McDonald also noted

the size of the crowd and  
thanked them for being there.

"We really appreciate your  
support," she said, before going  
on to thank the council, the  
parks and recreation department  
and the sports corporation for  
working to get the theater back  
up and running.