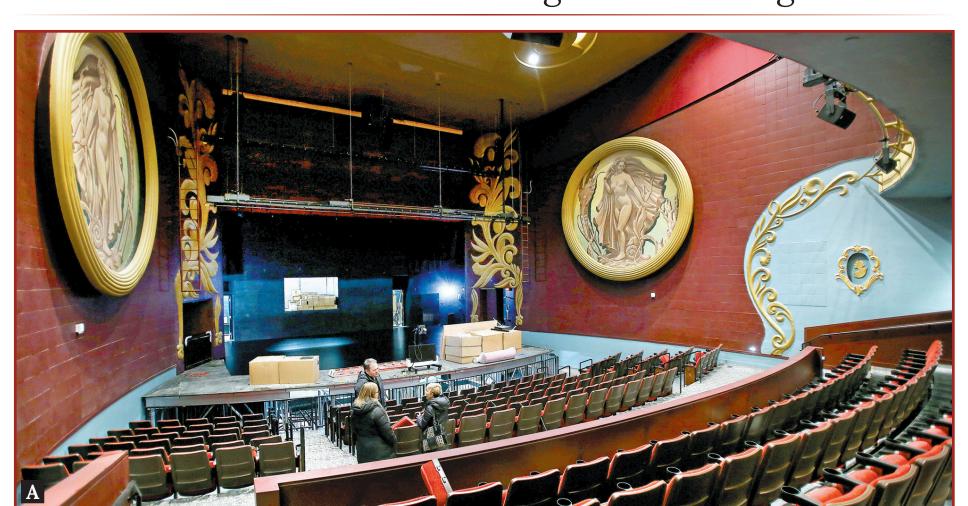
## Contractor rose to meet challenges of restoring NorShor



**By Brady Slater** bslater@duluthnews.com

lastic runners lined pristine red carpets to keep off the salt, snow and construction dust. The Nor-Shor Theatre wasn't quite ready for its big reveal.

But it was close.

And it was Tim Huber ticking through the list of finishing touches during a January visit from the News Tribune.

"Oh, about 8 billion of them," said Huber, the project manager for Johnson Wilson Constructors of Duluth. "It's been a challenge, no question. We've done many remodels, but never a theater and not like this."

There were light bulbs and letters for the marquee still to come; waybuilding; touches of paint here and there; and outcapacity down by about a third — some- unforeseen challenges thing planners thought the bedrock that needed

special experience.

"Intimate is the word I like to use a lot," Huber said.

the interior of the nearly 120-year-old venue. One worker snapped in the molding around a window belonging to a pleathercovered theater door. Another hurriedly pushed a loaded cart. Huber did the slow walk-andtalk through what is an expansive place. Like most showpiece theaters, what a person meets on the outside is magnified tenfold on the inside, where a cavernous interior belies even the most suggestive entrance. It can make for

"It's four stories and there's another 30 feet of space (floor-to-ceilsigns to go up within the ing) in the attic," Huber said from inside the theater, where black ceilings fitting and stocking of the soared and from underbrand-new lounge and neath the stage peered a concessionary, a luxury brand-new orchestra pit. that helped carve the- It's there that contractors met one of their first

a near magical transition.

would make for a more to be chiseled out to form the hollow because "we couldn't use dynamite in here," Huber said.

Interior demolition Workers criss-crossed throughout parts of the building was happening as late as October, Huber said, even as the re-creation was coming to life around it.

Deteriorated decorative wall molds each a story tall had to be reconstructed out of plaster to match the still original, taller ones on the wings of the stage. The swirling patterns accentuate the tall Renaissance-style paintings on the north and south walls and establish

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A. The remodeled NorShor Theatre has brand-new seating, a new stage and restored wall molds and paintings. This view is from the main floor. B. The original photo taken of Split Rock Lighthouse, mounted at the top of a staircase at the NorShor Theatre, has been rescanned from the original negative and reprinted for a cleaner, sharper look. C. Freshlypainted walls, restored decorative wall molds and plush seats give the NorShor Theatre an air of elegance. D. The shipping and mining-themed bas-relief at the top of a stairway to the balcony of the NorShor has been cleaned and the wall repainted. Photos by Bob King / rking@duluthnews.com.

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