

Clark Patterson Lee helps bring laughter to life at National Comedy Center

Kevin Oklobzija

When the first official laughter at the National Comedy Center in Jamestown is unleashed this morning, visitors will experience 30,700 square feet of never-ending humor.

From old sitcom clips to a hologram theater to comedy karaoke, the world's only comedic museum/display center celebrates comedy as art.

The architects at Rochester-based Clark Patterson Lee are already smiling, and not just because video clips at the \$50

best, where the blueprints were a blank canvas and the designers were allowed to bring dreams to structural life.

Instead, architect Paul Hedin and his team, Steve Thorsell, Brady Morrison, Adam Bentham and John Healy, needed to work within the existing framework and the historic preservation requirements of a 158-year-old train station and a 106-year-old warehouse.

The finished product is a combination of simplicity and elegance, said Todd Liebert, CEO of Clark Patterson Lee.

"It's not about the building, it's about what's in it," he said



one that meshes well with the train station and warehouse. "You've got to do things that complement but don't mimic," Liebert said. "The building's an envelope for the technology. The building needed to not distract from the components that are there. And the technology is probably equal to the cost of construction."

probably the equivalent to the (Strong) Museum of Play in Rochester," Liebert said. "Not in size, but in excitement. People from all over the world will be coming to visit."

The opening week festivities include performances from an array of stars, including Amy Schumer, Lily Tomlin, Dan Aykroyd, Laraine Newman and

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million NCC made them laugh. They designed the structure that houses it all.

But this was not simply architectural genius at its creative

of the approach. "It was taking two historically significant structures and trying them together with a pedestrian link."

That link is a new building,

The National Comedy Center has been a project in the making for perhaps three decades and is Jamestown's way of honoring its most famous former resident, Lucille Ball.

"It's a big deal in Jamestown,

Lucie Arnaz, the daughter of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz.

For more information, visit the center's website.

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