

**By Carrie Haderlie  
Boomerang Staff Writer**

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Tangible steps to demolish the crumbling Fox Theater will begin in days.

ESA, Inc., a demolition company out of Colorado, will perform a controlled drop of the Fox Theater roof, 112 S. Second beginning Sunday. Work will likely continue Monday, and crews will disassemble their equipment on Tuesday, Community Development Director Peter Wysocki said.

"As with any demolition project, the city would recommend that people stay a safe distance away from the job site," Wysocki said. "The risk is very minimal of any unanticipated structural failures, meaning the walls falling down. There should be no environmental or airborne hazardous waste."

The city submitted a work plan to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Division, he said, and a DEQ representative will be on site during the drop.

"The roof and all the other stuff that is in the building will be wetted down. There will be a second person on the lift watering down the roof and the walls and the pigeon feces. The risk of anything uncontrolled happening is very minimal, but there is still going to be a lot of personnel there," Wysocki said.

In late 2008, the Laramie city councilors unanimously voted that the demolition of the Fox Theater roof was "emergency work," allowing the city to waive the contract bid process required by state statute. Council then unanimously voted to award the roof demolition contract for \$34,756 plus a 10 percent contingency, to ESA, Inc.

Second Street from University Avenue to the First Interstate Bank entrances will be closed during the drop.

"We are hoping that we can retain those two driveways into the bank," Wysocki said. "We won't know for sure until the crane actually gets there to see how much room they need. The West side sidewalk will be closed, but we will have it open so people can get into the Salvation Army."

ESA, Inc., plans to demolish the roof by ascending the structure in a crane, removing the roof except for the main support beams and dropping debris into the middle of the building.

There are probably pigeon roosting areas all over the inside of the Fox, including on stage and in the basement, Wysocki said. But the roof collapse will most likely not leave the animals without shelter or looking for a new roost, he continued.

"There are very few pigeons on top of the roof. By eliminating some of the roof components there, it probably will not affect the roosting habitats," Wysocki said.

Wysocki said there shouldn't be any environmental concerns during the roof drop.

"It should be a pretty safe operation. And DEQ inspectors will be there during the demolition as well as a structural engineer," he said.

According to a work plan previously provided by ESA, Inc., to the city, the roof framing on the Fox Theater is about 50 percent intact. However, the roof structure that supports the small, raised structure near the front of the building is collapsing into the building, pulling the roof framing away from the concrete interior walls. Most of the ceilings inside the building are in poor condition, including some that have collapsed entirely.



The Fox Theater roof demolition begins Sunday. People are advised to stay a safe distance away. Boomerang file photo