

Former Crown Theatre manager to pay \$279K to investors, judge rules

https://www.nwitimes.com/news/former-crown-theatre-manager-to-pay-279k-to-investors-judge-rules/article_8fc2325e-62fe-5955-be2f-db07ea23807e.html

URGENT

CROWN THEATRE

Former Crown Theatre manager to pay \$279K to investors, judge rules


Mary Freda
Apr 26, 2020



Brad Strom, of Crown Point, poses for a portrait outside the Crown Theater in downtown Crown Point on Ma 4, 2018.

CROWN POINT — After failing to appear in court or comply with Indiana Rules of Trial Procedure, former Crown Theatre project manager Brad Strom is facing a hefty fine.

On April 17, Lake Superior Court Judge John Sedia granted a default judgment in a civil lawsuit alleging Strom never paid back a **\$70,000 loan to two Crown Point residents**.

 2 fronted Crown Theatre project manager \$70K; loan has gone unpaid, lawsuit alleges

Now, Strom is facing a \$279,048.53 debt after failing to take action in the lawsuit, which was filed Feb. 6.

According to court records, Frank and Louis Traina were asked by Strom to initially invest \$50,000 toward the renovation of Crown Theatre.

 Crown Theatre without tenant; owner debating next steps, attorney says

It's unclear how the Trainas know Strom — court records don't establish a relationship, and the Trainas have declined to comment on the case through their attorneys.

An agreement between Strom and the Trainas was signed Aug. 14, 2018, stating the Trainas would loan Strom \$50,000.

According to the agreement, the loan was supposed to be paid back with 100% interest by Aug. 1, 2019, totaling \$100,000.

 Indiana AG advances complaints filed by Crown Theatre patrons

Although the agreement was signed in August 2018, Strom began receiving money from the Trainas nearly three weeks prior, the lawsuit alleges.

Former Crown Theatre manager to pay \$279K to investors, judge rules

On July 26, 2018, Frank Traina wrote Strom a check for \$10,000. From July 31 to Aug. 10, he would give Strom an additional \$15,000, records show.

On Aug. 14, 2018 — the day the loan agreement was signed — Louis Traina wrote Strom a \$25,000 check, records show.

The former project manager again approached the Trainas for funding, asking for an additional \$20,000, with a promise to pay it back in full. By Oct. 10, Frank Traina had loaned Strom \$40,000, and Louis Traina had loaned him \$30,000, the lawsuit alleges.

According to the lawsuit, **Strom failed to make "any good faith efforts" to begin paying back the \$70,000 loan.** **Former Crown Theatre manager to pay \$279K to investors, judge rules**

Crown Theatre patrons take action after not receiving refunds, records show

Additionally, the lawsuit alleges Strom was lent \$15,008 from Frank Traina on Aug. 19, 2019 — days after the initial loan was supposed to be repaid. Strom asked for the money due to personal financial hardships, records show.

A week later, Strom and Crown Productions LLC — where Strom is listed as manager, according to Indiana Secretary of State records — wrote Frank Traina a check for \$15,008. It was later returned as non-sufficient funds, records show.

Strom, who has ignored various requests for comment from The Times, is no longer associated with renovations at the theater.

Donnie Baker show relocated to Hobart after Crown Theatre delays

In March, Strom entered in a mutual agreement with owners of the building to end his lease early, said Alex Kutanovski, attorney for TSA Properties LLC, which owns the building.

Former Crown Theatre manager to pay \$279K to investors, judge rules

Originally, the lease was set to expire April 30, 2021.

Currently, the theater is facing 22 complaints filed with the Indiana attorney general's office for failure to refund.

A majority of those complaints have been referred to the consumer litigation section of the attorney general's office for further review, Public Information Officer Melissa Gustafson said.

Gallery: Recent arrests booked into Lake County Jail

Be the first to know

Get local news delivered to your inbox!