



The band Money Shot 2.0 performs at the new Highmark Amphitheater on Tuesday. (JACK HANRAHAN/ERIE TIMES-NEWS)

## 'Great, new facility'

**Renovated Liberty Park amphitheater hosts ceremony, free concert**

By Ron Leonardi

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The sun's rays glistened on Presque Isle Bay's choppy waters early Tuesday evening as concertgoers parked lawn chairs at Liberty Park and awaited a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a free concert celebrating Erie's newly renovated Highmark Amphitheater.

A stiff breeze from Lake Erie made it feel like spring or fall, but a couple thousand music aficionados didn't seem to mind the chilly temperatures.

About a dozen Erie County and Highmark Health officials unveiled the renovated structure, which is located on Erie's west bayfront, in a ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Then, it was time to rock to the sounds of Erie band Money Shot 2.0, and the music of Steve Augeri, a former frontman for the rock band Journey.

The \$570,000 project features a new, permanent roof made of a hard plastic called thermoplastic polyolefin



Steve Winkelbauer, of the band Money Shot 2.0, performs at the new Highmark Amphitheater on Tuesday at Liberty Park. (JACK HANRAHAN/ERIE TIMES-NEWS)

### Online Extras

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that is supported by glue-laminated wood beams.

A June 2015 thunderstorm destroyed the fabric canopy that had covered the amphitheater's stage for nearly 20 years.

"This roof is weather resistant, and the material it is made out of is actually used

to build bridges in Alaska," said Brenda Sandberg, the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority's executive director. "It's the same type of wood that was used at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, so it's very, very sturdy and able to withstand the elements."

Work crews from Erie-based E.E. Austin & Son Inc., handled foundation work and construction of the roof, according to Sandberg.

"This is a great, new

See FACILITY, B2

## FACILITY

Continued from B1

facility," Erie Mayor Joe Sinnott said. "This amphitheater is very popular and very widely used, and the old structure had some limitations, as we saw in that storm. Something like this is a

better functioning cover for this stage. It allows us to do more with it, and, obviously, we don't have to worry about this one falling. I think it's a logical addition to this park because of how the park is utilized."

Work on the roof began in mid-April and was completed about two weeks ago, Sandberg said. "We had all the

foundations go in last fall," she said. "In order to be economical, we reused the previous stage that the canopy structure sat on top of. The structure is larger than that previous tent. There was no additional space added to the stage, which is still 40 (feet) by 60 (feet). From a maintenance standpoint, the new roof is something

we don't have to put up, take down, and we don't have to do repairs to it. There will be some maintenance, as there is with every building, but it will be much less significant than it was before."

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