

National de la Cinematographie. The organization's recent report indicates that theatre operators recorded a 3.2 percent improvement in admissions for the 12-month period ended last May. While ticket sales in March dropped by 1.3 percent compared with the same month in 2003, April and May admits bloomed by 44 and 10.6 percent, respectively, on the strength of both domestic and U.S. product in release. Hollywood dominated the French market, if only slightly, during the five months, taking about a 46 percent share compared with the 42.2 percent share garnered by Gallic films.

## APRIL ADMITS FLOWER IN THE U.K.

**LONDON**—Also welcoming news of rising ticket sales were British exhibitors, who saw admits reach record levels in the month of April. According to the latest statistics released by the U.K.'s Cinema Advertising Association, admissions during the four weeks surged to 14.5 million, a 17 percent improvement over a year ago and the most turnstiles counted in April since 1972. Leading the box-office charge was Warner Bros.' "Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed," which earned approximately £14.4 million (US\$25.5 million) at the British box office, making it the top grossing film in the territory for the month.

## MODERN CINEPLEX SLATED FOR SLOVAK

**TRNAVA, SLOVAK**—A local film distribution company recently confirmed plans to

how a new cineplex in its native Slovak. The company known as Continental is currently constructing a three-screen theatre in the town of Trnava. The distrib ultimately aims to open three additional sites throughout the territory by 2006. With the exception of two multiplexes in the urban market of Bratislava that account for almost half of the entire territory's box-office earnings, Slovak is largely absent of modern moviegoing facilities. Continental's Trnava site is scheduled for a September grand opening.

## PACIFIC OVERTURES

## SKY CITY TAKES COMPLETE CONTROL OF EXHIBITION ARM

**WELLINGTON**—As has been expected, Kiwi casino operator Sky City Entertainment Group has acquired enough shares in its cinema division Sky City Leisure to force remaining shareholders to sell their stakes to the corporation. The New Zealand outfit, which confirmed its intent to completely takeover Sky City Leisure earlier this year, recently upped its holdings in the exhibition arm to 95.75 percent, a stake that allows Sky City to demand that all ordinary shares and mandatory convertible notes not yet acquired be sold at a price of NZ\$0.82 (US\$1.25) per share and NZ\$1.60 (US\$2.43) per note. Prior to the takeover bid, Sky City held a 74 percent stake in Sky City Leisure. Upon completion of the stock

acquisition, the cinema operation is expected to be delisted from local stock market the New Zealand Exchange.

## READING BUYS UP COMPETITOR'S SCREENS

**SYDNEY**—Exhibition circuit Reading Entertainment recently expanded its Australian presence by acquiring several theatrical holdings from Down Under theatre chain Anderson Multiplex Cinemas. According to local observers, U.S.-based Reading has purchased six moviehouses comprising 37 screens and is currently awaiting approval to take over another eight-screen Anderson site outside of Melbourne. In addition to its holdings in Australia, Reading currently controls 31 screens in New Zealand, with an eight-plex scheduled to bow in Auckland later this year.

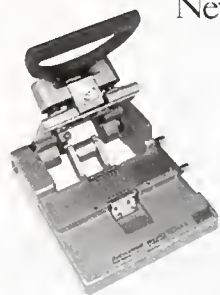
## THAILAND'S MAJOR CINEPLEX TO ACQUIRE COMPETITION

**BANGKOK**—Industry observers report that Thai exhibition giant Major Cineplex Group has confirmed its intent to takeover its leading theatrical rival in the territory, EGV Entertainment. Although exact details of the deal were not immediately available, Major Cineplex revealed in a filing with the Stock Exchange of Thailand that the company plans to issue new shares as part of its efforts to completely acquire EGV holdings. Major Cineplex currently controls 111 screens at 12 sites throughout Thailand.



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