

OHIO

NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS BOWS DAYTON LUXURY SITE

National Amusements has opened its latest Cinema de Lux-branded theater in Dayton. The Dedham, Mass.-based exhibition giant, which has a dominant presence in Southwest Ohio through its Showcase Cinemas banner, has grown its presence in the region with the new 14-plex. Catering to an upscale crowd, the venue offers free wi-fi access in its lounge area, a concierge-style service desk and order-at-your-seat concessions. Additionally, half of the Cinema de Lux 14's auditoriums will be outfitted with digital screens. "We are excited to bring our unique Cinema de Lux entertainment experience to our Dayton-area patrons," said National Amusements president Shari Redstone. The Dayton cineplex is the fourth National Amusements Cinema de Lux site to open in the Buckeye State.

MARCUS ADDS GIANT SCREEN TO COLUMBUS-AREA SITE

Marcus Theatres aims to open its second

UltraScreen in the Columbus, Ohio, area. The company's trademark giant screen is slated for construction at its existing plex in the community of Pickerington. In addition to the 70-foot wide screen, the new auditorium will hold about 400 seats and stadium-tiered seating. Milwaukee-based Marcus, which operates more than 500 screens throughout the Midwest, has launched the big, big-screen concept at sites in Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois, with the latest UltraScreen to be the eighth. Construction on the Pickerington UltraScreen is scheduled to start soon, with the grand opening set for next fall.

OKLAHOMA

CONSTRUCTION STARTS ON MIAMI PLEX

Groundbreaking began on the Miami Cineplex in the Northeast Oklahoma small town of Miami. Reported to be the first modern moviehouse in the general area, the new theatrical downtown project is being constructed by Native American group the Miami tribe. Slated to hold four screens, the Miami Cineplex is expected to celebrate its grand opening next February.

TEXAS

DALLAS CINEMA ADDS ROOM

Metro Cinema in Dallas' Colleyville has put the finishing touches on its deluxe screening rooms, available for private rentals. The newly launched cineplex expects the smaller 35-seat spaces to be rented for business meetings and other professional gatherings. In addition to cinema screens ready for PowerPoint presentations, the rooms amenities include leather swivel seats and surround sound systems.

VERMONT

BURLINGTON THEATRE CLOSES

After 25 years in business, Burlington's Ethan Allen Cinemas recently closed down operations. Staff at the theater blamed slow ticket sales for the shuttering. The site, which has been operated by local exhibitor Merrill Jarvis, is not being put up for sale as management mulls over possible options for the empty space, including reopening it as a moviehouse. Jarvis was the owner of the cinema at the time of its grand opening in 1981, reacquiring it from the exhibition giant Hoyts Cinemas in 2000.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

by Francesca
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NORTHERN EXPOSURE

CINEPLEX TO BUILD IN HAMILTON

HAMILTON, ONTARIO—Canada's largest theatrical chain just keeps getting bigger with news of yet another multiplex project in Ontario. Cineplex Entertainment's latest modern plex is slated for Hamilton, where it will anchor the Heritage Greene Centre. Expected to measure approximately 41,000 square feet, the moviehouse will bow under Cineplex's SilverCity banner. The 1,295-screen chain also controls the Cineplex Odeon, Galaxy, Coliseum and Colossus brands throughout the Great White North. Cineplex VP of communications and investor relations Pat Marshall anticipates that the venue, dubbed SilverCity Hamilton Cinema, will "have an enormous impact on the local community" by attracting larger crowds and growing business revenue for nearby restaurants and retailers. Still subject to local government approvals, the Hamilton theatrical project is slated for groundbreaking in spring of next year, putting it on track for an autumn grand opening.

PACIFIC OVERTURES

VILLAGE ROADSHOW POSTS LOSS ON CIRCUIT SALES

SYDNEY—Citing the sale and closure of the majority of its international exhibition holdings, Aussie film conglomerate Village Roadshow noted overall losses in the fiscal year ended June 30. The company's red ink for the 12 months equaled AUS\$35 million (US\$27 million), significantly falling from the profit of AUS\$49 million (US\$38 million) recorded in the previous year. The recent loss, however, has been offset by the company's massive restructuring, according to chairman John Kirby. Contributing to the downturn were costs incurred by Village's exhibition interests, including a write-down of its stake in Oz chain Palace Cinemas and a loss of almost AUS\$18 million (US\$13.5 million) from the sale or closure of its theatrical ventures in Argentina, New Zealand, Fiji and the U.K. Additionally, Village's exhibition arm saw profits drop to AUS\$1.3 million (US\$975,000) from the previous year's AUS\$18 million (US\$13.5 million). Village's domestic cinema circuit, however, is on track for positive financials, with first-half figures indicating an upturn in revenues and profit from rising admissions and ticket prices.

CATHAY OPENS LATEST MALAYSIAN SITE

KUALA LUMPUR—Southeast Asian exhibitor Cathay Cineplex recently opened a flagship site in Malaysia's Mutiara Damansara market. The 10-screen Cineleisure, as its known, comprises nearly 58,000 square feet and more than 1,900 seats. Among the new theater's amenities are a free Internet zone, a "Mom and Tots Corner" for parents to enjoy with their infants and toddlers and several advanced ticketing

options including a "drive-thru" service that allows patrons to purchase tickets without ever leaving their car. Additionally, Cathay, like its American exhibition circuit counterparts Century Theatres, Regal Cinemas and most recently AMC Theatres, will devote part of its latest plex to arthouse fare. A 94-seat auditorium at the Cineleisure dubbed The Picturehouse will program exclusively alternative and independent films.

U.S. FILMS DOMINATE CHINESE MARKET

BEIJING—Hollywood proved a favorite among Sino moviegoers, with just nine American features accounting for more than half of the market share during the first half of the year. The January-June timeframe saw "The Da Vinci Code" gross nearly 106 million yuan (US\$13.3 million), while "King Kong" earned 102 million yuan (US\$12.8 million). Other top grossers, according to estimates published by Chinese media, included "Poseidon," "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "Eight Below," "Ice Age: The Meltdown," "The Transporter," "Firewall" and "The Sentinel." The territory's overall box office during the six months totaled about one billion yuan (US\$125 million), marking a 40-percent increase from the previous year.

LOCAL PRODUCTIONS FLOAT INDIAN BOX OFFICE

NEW DELHI—Unlike the Chinese market, the Indian box office's record first half grew on the strength of local product, with helmer Rakesh Roshan's superhero flick "Krrish" earning an incredible 1.5 million rupees (US\$33 million) during the six months. Also contributing significantly to