

CONWAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



B&B Theatres Have Big Plans for Conway Movie Theater

by Devin Parks, Director of Economic Development, Conway Chamber of Commerce

The closing of Frank Theaters in Conway left a void in family entertainment options for Conway residents, one that the Conway Chamber of Commerce aimed to see filled as soon as possible. In less than six months, the Conway Chamber found an ideal candidate in B&B Theatres to breathe new life into a cinema that has seen better days.

Conway City Council recently approved theaters this summer. "We have an incentive package that's expected to heavily assist B&B Theatres in their goal of making more than \$4 million in upgrades to the company's Conway movie theater.

Conway City Council leaders unanimously agreed to reimburse the company for a host of charges, including business license fees, hospitality fees, property taxes, and half of the water and sewer fees for construction.

Dennis McIntire of B&B Theatres outlined the Missouri-based company's plans for the Conway theater. B&B bought the

2,000-plus seat building last year. The site's former owner, Frank Theaters, shuttered the place amid bankruptcy proceedings.

Despite the new challenges that a virus like COVID-19 introduces to the theater industry, McIntire said the company expects to reopen all of its faith that people are going to come back to the movies," he said. "I've been doing this for 30-plus years and movies are as popular now as they were before, even with all of the other venues of entertainment.

The company has big plans for renovations at the Conway theater. The renovations include basic changes such as replacing the Frank Theaters sign and repainting the front of the building to more elaborate upgrades like adding heated

> electric recliners, updating the sound replacing system, several updating the lobby, adding a bar and much more.

There are also some concepts B&B

expects to add to the theater. One is called "screenPLAY!" and it involves a specialized auditorium for families with small children. A play area in the actual theater. which is open 30 minutes before showtime

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will give kids the option to burn off energy before the movie. McIntire said there are 11 theaters with this option across the country and B&B runs nine of them.

Another concept is called "The Lvric" and it's a smaller 38-seat screens, space that



offers a nostalgic movie viewing setting. The company expects to also rent that area out for conferences and meetings.

As part of the agreement approved Monday, the incentives could be worth more than \$17,000 for construction-related fees. That doesn't include the reimbursement for business license fees, hospitality fees and property taxes for up to five years. The city property taxes alone were about \$20,000 per year under the former owner. Although they acknowledged the price

tag is significant, city officials said they want our community," Mayor Barbara Blainto promote family entertainment in Conway. "I certainly see it as a huge addition to give it our full support."

For a full list of business incentive opportunities provided by the City of Conway, please visit http://www.conwayscnow.com/business-environment/incentives/city-incentives.

For more information on the Conway Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development initiatives, contact Devin Parks at (843) 248-2273.



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Bellamy said. "I certainly hope that we can