

Mall facelift could be spark for Fox Lake

By MARC JENKINS
Managing Editor
Fox Lake Press - 8/12/03

As the former Lakeland Plaza emerges into the new Fox Lake Towne Centre, its owner - and at least one tenant - are saying this could be the start of better things to come for downtown Fox Lake.

Why the buzz about the downtown mall? It's about making Fox Lake the place to be, especially in summer.

"The goal?" said Jim Minick, vice-president of Ardmir Properties, which owns the Towne Centre, "The goal is to become the new Lake Geneva. They pass us to go there, why not stay in Fox Lake?"

Although the resurrection of a once-proud downtown isn't just complete with a mall makeover, it does go to help the village take the next step.

And Fox Lake, Minick said, is more than willing to help.

"Claude LeMere (Fox Lake's community development director) has been one of the best assets in being proactive in bringing up the downtown," Minick said, "We're very excited about the expansion of the cinema. We're looking to give people a reason to come to the Centre, not just for one reason."

Current Towne Centre tenants include Fox Lake Theatre, High-Lo

Foods, Family Dollar, Vintage Closet, Somethin' Fishy, Ultimate Tanning and Spa Body Services, Curves For Women and Bay Billiards.

Three more tenants are still needed to round out the mall, which include a major toy store and two yet to be sold.

Classic Cinemas, which owns Fox Lake Theatre, has already committed itself even more to becoming a downtown destination. It will add four more movie screens to the Fox Lake Theatre to boost its total to nine.

"It's good news for the moviegoer," said Mark Mazrimas, Classic Cinemas' marketing manager. "Along with giving the theatre a nice facelift, they'll be able to see more choices on the screen."

Fox Lake Theatre will become even more patron-friendly, according to Mazrimas.

"The admissions rates are one of the lowest around," he said. The theatre, in addition to offering free refills on all popcorns and pop, will bring back its Wednesday morning movie series, offering G and PG movies for \$1.

Minick said renovations at Somethin' Fishy, a pet store, should be completed by September.

But filling the Centre is not where Ardmir wants to stop. Minick said he would like to see more fast-food anchors sprout up, along with a couple nice sit-down restaurants.