

NEWS

Pandemic relief grants awarded to local theaters, summer camps

By ERIC JOHNSON
ASST. EDITOR

Theater owners with North Woods connections will receive nearly \$400,000 in combined funding from the Movie Theater Assistance Grant Program to help offset losses from 2020 pandemic shutdowns, while summer camps in Eagle River, Conover, Phelps, Rhinelander, Woodruff and Minocqua were each awarded \$50,000 grants this month.

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers recently announced more than \$14 million in grants were awarded to movie theaters, summer camps and minor league sports teams throughout the state, part of more than \$140 million allotted to support the recovery of Wisconsin's tourism and entertainment industries during the coronavirus pandemic.

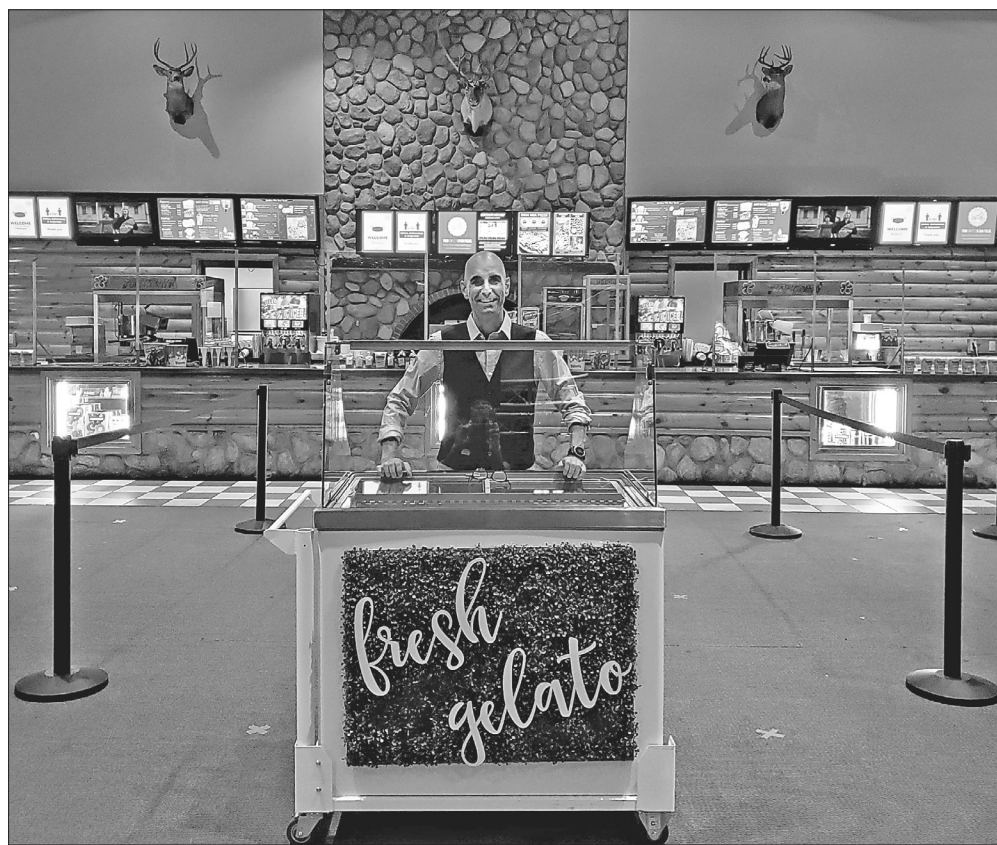
Movie Theater Assistance granted \$60,000 to Hodag Hospitality Holdings, LLC, which operates Vilas Cinema in Eagle River, and Rouman Amusement Co., owner of Rouman Cinema in Rhinelander, \$90,000.

Suick Theatres of Wisconsin, which operates Lakeland Cinema in Woodruff, will receive \$240,000.

"By acknowledging our industry's extremely slow pace of recovery from this pandemic, Gov. Evers has created a supplemental grant program providing critical assistance that will help bridge us to the other side," said George Rouman, president of the Sussex-based National Association of Theatre Owners of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The trade association represents nearly 100 theater locations throughout Wisconsin.

Rouman also serves as president and chief executive officer of Rouman Amusement Co., Inc., which operates the six-screen Rouman Cinema at 1205 Lincoln St. in Rhinelander and is celebrating its centennial this year.

"After suffering nearly six months of complete closure in 2020 with almost zero revenue, followed by a very tumultuous 2021, this lifeline will help movie the-



Rouman Amusement Co. president and CEO George Rouman, shown in the lobby of Rouman Cinema in Rhinelander, serves as president of the Sussex-based National Association of Theatre Owners of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, a trade association representing nearly 100 theater locations throughout Wisconsin. —Contributed Photo

aters survive in Wisconsin," said Rouman. "Due to our unique business model and the ongoing challenge that we've faced in getting new movie content consistently as a result of COVID-19, our industry's recovery is taking much longer than many other sectors of the economy," he said.

"We continue to be thankful that we're operating in a state that has identified our ongoing struggle, and recognizes the cultural importance that our movie theaters have in the communities. It's been a tremendously difficult time for us these last 20 months. We were one of the very first industries to shut down, and we will be very likely one of the last, if not the last, that will be fully able to regain operation."

Rouman said the Movie Theater Assistance Grant Program is a lifesaver.

"We've gone so long with so many fixed costs to absorb, but then when you can't operate for six months, and then you go nearly another year after that with very, very limited operation, you're still incurring expenses — property taxes, heating, cooling, utilities, attempting

to keep people on payroll," he said. "It's been challenging. We've had to defer a lot of maintenance, and now we're getting into a situation where there's supply chain problems, so we're even struggling to get supplies, repair parts and equipment. It's been a struggle. This grant program is a very welcome announcement. It's going to help a lot of small town theater locations survive and get to the other side."

The Movie Theater Assistance Grant Program is a more than \$10 million program that provides approximately \$15,000 per screen to 49 theater companies. This is the second pandemic relief program to assist the movie theater industry in Wisconsin, bringing the total investment in Wisconsin's movie theaters to \$20 million.

Camps receive grants

Summer camps in Eagle River, Conover, Phelps, Rhinelander, Woodruff and Minocqua were awarded \$50,000 grants this month to make up losses from 2020 pandemic shutdowns.

The awards are part of a total of \$1.8 million

handed to 37 eligible Wisconsin summer camps by the Summer Camp Assistance Grant Program. It's the first pandemic relief program targeting summer camps in Wisconsin, according to grant officials.

The grants are funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Area camps that will receive grant money are Trees for Tomorrow, Chipewawa Ranch Camp, Camp Ojibwa, Towering Pines, Camp Menominee and Camp Nicolet in Eagle River; Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in Conover; Camp Birch Knoll in Phelps; Camp Deerhorn and Camp Horsehoe in Rhinelander; Red Arrow Camp in Woodruff; and F&H Corp. and Camp Kawaga in Minocqua.

"Funds from the Summer Camp Assistance Grant are really going to help us make up for lost revenue from, obviously, the past two years, but specifically the past couple of summers," said Trees for Tomorrow Executive Director Cheryl Todea. "The pandemic left us with a reduction of about 75% in our youth program attendance in the summer of 2020, and we were at about a 25% reduction in 2021. This funding really helps to fill some of that gap. As a nonprofit, program revenue is really essential to our existence, so when program revenue is down like it has been, we need that support from programs like the Summer Camp Assistance Grant. Not all nonprofits have survived the pandemic, so I'm very thankful that we have resources like this. I know we're not the only ones that, honestly, probably would not be around if it wasn't for some of this state and federal recovery assistance."

Todea said the ARPA-funded grant award is "one of the many things that have helped Trees for Tomorrow survive the pandemic," including the financial support of community members, alumni and friends of Trees for Tomorrow.



Rouman Cinema in Rhinelander was recently awarded a \$90,000 grant from the \$10 million Movie Theater Assistance Grant Program, which provided approximately \$15,000 per

screen in pandemic-related financial relief to 49 theater companies, including those owning Vilas Cinema in Eagle River and Lakeland Cinema in Woodruff. —Contributed Photo

Deadline is January 4 to file for local boards

People interested in serving on a county board, town board or school board have until 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4, to file nomination papers. The first day to circulate nomination papers was Dec. 1, 2021.

The election will be held Tuesday, April 5, 2022. If a primary election is necessary, it will be held Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022.

County boards and some town boards have supervisors up for re-election this spring. Town boards with five-member boards will have elections for just two supervisor positions.

School boards at Northland Pines, Three Lakes and Phelps school districts also have some board members with expiring terms.

In addition, there will be elections for two circuit court judges in Vilas County for the term of six-years. Judge Martha Milanowski, who replaced Judge Neal A. Nielsen III last fall, will be up for re-election. Her six-year term in Branch 1 is expiring July 31, 2022. The second circuit court judge will be for Branch 2, which is currently vacant. Gov. Tony Evers announced earlier this year a Vilas County Circuit Court Branch 2 would start Aug. 1, 2022.

County boards

Vilas County supervisors for each district have terms expiring and include: District 1, William Otterpohl; District 2, Charles Hayes; District 3, Michael Biszak; District 4, Michael MacKenzie; District 5, Grant Verhulst; District 6, Michael Cady; District 7, Ronald De Bruyne; District 8, Thomas Maulson; District 9, Robert Hanson; District 10, Joseph Wildcat; District 11, Marvin Anderson; District 12, Carolyn Ritter; District 13, Walter Maciag; District 14, Arthur Kunde; District 15, Mary Rasmussen; District 16, Daniel Swicichowski; District 17, Holly Tomlanovich; District 18, Ronald

Kressin; District 19, Gerald Burkett; District 20, Patrick Weber; and District 21, Daniel Kramer.

Oneida County supervisors from this area with expiring terms include: District 10, Jim Winkler; District 13, Dave Hintz; District 14, Scott Holewinski; and District 15, Bob Metropulos.

Vilas towns

The following Vilas County towns in this area have candidates with expiring two-year terms:

Cloverland — Supervisor 3 Millie Ritzer and Supervisor 4 Joe Spitz.

Conover — Supervisor 3 Gary Lageux Jr. and Supervisor 4 Dale Mayo.

Lincoln — Supervisor 2 Bill Hassey, and Supervisor 4 Bruce Richter.

Phelps — Supervisors Debbie Vold and Ronald Buell Jr., and Phelps Sanitary District Commissioner Daniel Kintz.

St. Germain — Supervisor 1 Ted Ritter and Supervisor 2 Brian Cooper.

Three Lakes

The Three Lakes Town has two supervisors with expiring two-year terms, supervisors Brian Slizewski and Ed Starke.

School boards

Some school board members at Northland Pines, Three Lakes and Phelps have expiring terms and include the following:

Northland Pines — Area D (town of Plum Lake), Mike Sealander; and member at large No. 2, Jeff Shenk.

Three Lakes — Terry McCloskey and Collette Sorgel.

Phelps — Donna Rosner.

State contest

There will be an election for one Court of Appeals judge. Judge Thomas M. Hruz has an expiring six-year term July 31, 2022.

Drew: FROM PAGE 1A

heritage.

Drew's husband, Anthony, now a print and digital editor with Cole Publishing in Three Lakes, was an award-winning assistant editor with the News-Review from 2010-'15. Drew's mother-in-law, Jean Drew, serves as the News-Review's production manager. She retires Jan. 3 after an award-winning 24-year career with the paper.

"I'm excited to do it," Drew said of becoming news editor. "Obviously, Gary leaves pretty big shoes to fill. I'm excited to keep bringing local news to the community, topics that matter to them, and I hope to keep up the standards that everyone's come to expect from the News-Review as an

award-winning newspaper. I want to boost our online presence and I have some plans to make some small changes, but ultimately the quality standards are going to remain the same. We've got a great team here."

In her spare time, Drew enjoys lake swimming and snowshoeing, noting both she and her husband "really enjoy the quietude of the North Woods." She also enjoys indulging in creative art projects including painting, drawing and wood-burning, as well as crafting Halloween décor.

Drew can be contacted by calling (715) 479-4421 or emailing michelled@vcnews-review.com.

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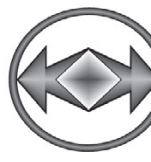


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