

Movie Theaters of Rochester Minnesota

Rochester, Minnesota offers events and activities to its residents and visitors throughout the year. From parks and hiking to shopping, to catching a concert at the Mayo Civic Center, there is always a possibility to stay active. During the cold winter months, or hot, humid summer days when it can be hard to stay active, Rochester can also offer relaxing alternatives, such as going to a movie at one of its three movie theaters. The current locations are spread out around the city, offering residents and visitors a close option no matter where they are staying.

Although three state-of-the-art theaters operate in Rochester today, the current set up is fairly recent. At one time, a national theater chain, Carmike Cinemas, owned and operated four movie theaters in Rochester, including Apache, Galleria, Barclay Square, and Cinema theaters. Cinema became known as the "cheap seats," as towards the end of its career, it offered older movies at a very reduced price. It was the first of the four to close. Gradually, the other three disappeared until in 2004 Carmike Cinemas' era in Rochester came to a close with the screens going dark at Barclay Square 6. During this decline other new theaters started making their mark. Chateau Theater and CineMagic Stadium entered the scene.

The Chateau was Rochester's first "modern" theater, opening in December of 2001 and offering 14 wall-to-wall screens, stadium style rocker seating, a large themed lobby, and digital sound. The lobby of Chateau is a replica of the medieval village décor of the original Chateau Theater that was opened in downtown Rochester in 1927. It provided operas, plays, concerts, vaudeville, and silent and talking movies until 1983 when it was closed. The building has since been renovated and converted into a bookstore.

CineMagic Hollywood Luxury Stadium, or Hollywood 12, opened about six months later with similar features to Chateau, but only contains 12 screens. With the closing of Carmike Cinemas' theaters, these two enjoyed dominance over the theater business in Rochester for three years until 2007 when Wehrenberg Theaters opened the Galaxy 14 Cine. When news of the new theater came to Rochester, the two existing theaters started talking and formed an agreement that placed both under the management of CineMagic. The two had enjoyed cooperating over the years and felt it unnecessary to compete when the third theater opened. With CineMagic's experience, that company took over.

The Galaxy 14 Cine is part of the 100+-year-old company, Wehrenberg Theaters. Wehrenberg is currently the oldest family-owned and operated theater circuit in the country. The Galaxy 14 came to Rochester offering stadium style seating, digital sound with the latest technology, and wall-to-wall screens, including the new "Mega-Screen," which is 65 feet wide and 25 feet tall. This will be the largest screen in the region. Another feature that the Galaxy offers is Fred's Drive-In, a food court in the lobby resembling a drive-in theater with seating made from classic 50's cars. The building also contains party rooms for birthday parties, and allows the auditoriums to be rented for group or corporate events.

These theaters now offer Rochester with three unique movie-going experiences. From the medieval theme of Chateau, to the 50's Driving-In at Wehrenberg, residents and visitors can enjoy films at anytime throughout the year. Besides the movies found in most theaters across the country, Rochester also offers a yearly Film Festival in the early summer, showcasing independent and foreign films from around the world. Escaping the winter cold, summer rains, or simply catching the latest blockbuster has turned into a one of a kind experience for Rochester Minnesota.

About the Author

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