

The Miami Herald

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CRIME
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SPORTS
Baseball Hall of Fame

HIGH-END MULTIPLEX IN WORKS DOWNTOWN

■ The latest attraction coming to downtown Miami: a 12-screen movie theater.

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In a move that signals confidence in Miami's economic recovery — and potential for growth in the city's urban core — the developer of the downtown Metropolitan Miami complex announced plans to add a high-end movie theater.

Plans call for the new theater at the Metropolitan Miami complex to open by late 2012 or early 2013. It will join a Whole Foods, set for completion in 2013, and the already-open Met 1 residential tower, Wells Fargo Center office tower and JW Marriott Marquis and Hotel Beaux Arts.

Adding a multiplex is the latest step in making the area a place where people want to live, work and play. That's a dramatic change of scenery from 10 years ago, when fewer than 40,000 people lived downtown and there was a dearth of options compared to other cities with cosmopolitan credentials.

But the building boom added towering high-rise buildings with 23,000 units — and the bust made those units more affordable for young professionals who wanted to live near their jobs. Now, 70,000 people live downtown, and the Miami Downtown Development Authority expects another 10,000 to move in by 2014.

The theater, said DDA executive director Alyce Robertson, was a missing piece for those new residents.

"This is an amenity that adds to the ambience of a 24-7 residential, commercial and entertainment district," Robertson said.

MDM Development Group said Tuesday that it had finalized an agreement with luxury theater company Silverspot to open a 55,000-square-foot, 12-screen theater as the anchor for the planned Met Square entertainment complex. It will also include retail and restaurant space.



CELEBRATING THE NEWS Caroline Turner, a senior, shows a celebratory dance at Miami Edison Senior High as principal James Ortiz announced that the school had gone from being an "F" school to a "C" school.



FIXING THE COOL A helicopter flies over a field of crops in South Florida on Tuesday, in hopes warmer air from the states will help protect crops.

S. Florida snuggles, farmers struggle in early cold snap

As the early winter months begin, farmers in South Florida are bracing for a cold snap that could impact their crops. The weather service predicts a period of below-normal temperatures, with a high of 75 and a low of 55. Farmers are using various techniques to protect their crops, including covering them with plastic and using windbreaks.

HEALTH
Elizabeth Edwards dies at 67
The former first lady of the United States died of cancer at her home in Washington, D.C.

CRIME
Manhunt for Paul Carnahan's killer
Police are searching for the man who shot and killed Paul Carnahan, a former member of Congress.

SPORTS
Baseball Hall of Fame
The Baseball Hall of Fame announced its list of inductees for the upcoming year.

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Screens to fill longtime void

"This is a total game-changer for the market," said Lyle Stern, principal with Koniver Stern Group, the retail leasing representative of Metropolitan Miami. "It's real urban living."

The downtown Miami corridor has added thousands of residents and dozens of restaurants, shops and hotels over the past decade. But the broader downtown area hasn't had a movie theater since the AMC at Omni International Mall closed in 1999 — and even that was more than a mile north of the proposed site near Biscayne Boulevard and Southeast Third Avenue.

For a night out at the movies, downtown residents have to drive to South Beach, Coconut Grove or South Miami.

Those are attorney Eric Bluestein's options — though he finds himself watching movies at home more often than venturing out to a theater these days.

"I like movies a lot," said Bluestein, 28, who lives in the Met 1 building. "Once they put a theater next to me, I'll definitely be going quite a bit."

Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, who chairs the DDA, said downtown offers sports with the American Airlines Arena and arts with the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, but lacks what he called the

"simple pleasures" of going to the movies.

"It makes it a whole community," he said. "There's no reason you have to leave."

The closest movie option, Paragon Grove 13, reopened in June after going dark for renovations for eight months at Coconut Grove's CocoWalk. Like the planned theater, that cinema sells wine and beer and allows patrons to reserve specific seats.

Silverspot, which has one other location, in Naples, boasts luxuries like large leather seats, hardwood floors and marble and glass finishes. Though pricing for Miami isn't yet available, general admission for adults at the Naples location is \$15.

MDM did not disclose projected development costs for the theater at the \$1 billion Metropolitan Miami complex.

James Marsh, a media and entertainment analyst for Piper Jaffray, said chains worldwide have been experimenting with offering high-end movie-going experiences. He said the concept hasn't yet been proven, but it could be a smarter move than trying to compete with nearby megaplexes.

Movies in general have fared "remarkably well" during the economic recession, Marsh said, despite the abundance of entertainment options on home television screens and mobile devices.

For Bluestein, who also works downtown, the promise of having a grocery store and movie theater in his back yard is "like a dream come true."

"It'll definitely make life a lot easier," he said. "Anytime you can avoid traffic down here, it lessens your stress."

His prediction: "I'm going to become a downtown hermit."