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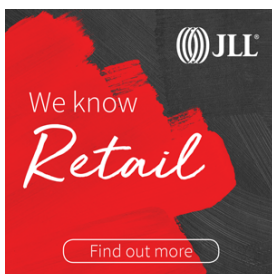
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Featured Article

Landmark Cinemas Sees Success Amid Continued Cross-Canada Expansion

October 29, 2019



PHOTO: VANCOUVER COURIER

By Mario Toneguzzi

Calgary-based **Landmark Cinemas**, which has been operating for 52 years, continues to expand its operations across the country with its recent opening in Regina and two more theatre sites under construction.

“We have 45 locations (in Canada) with two more under construction,” said **Bill Walker**, CEO of Landmark. “We don’t have a particular number in mind (for future expansion). It’s more just continuing to look at new opportunities where the population is growing and we think they’re under serviced from a theatre perspective.

“So we don’t have growth as the objective. We more just kind of have strategic opportunities as they arise. We’re seeing one or two a year that I think will be interesting.”





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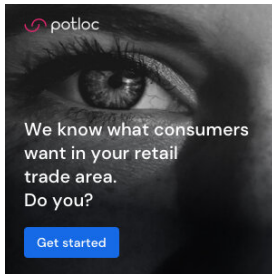
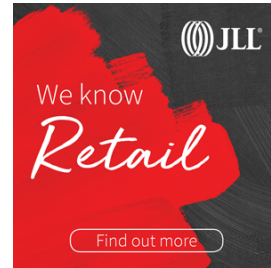


PHOTO: BRANDON HARDER, REGINA LEADER

The company is hoping for a Christmas opening at **CF Market Mall** in Calgary. The other location currently under construction is at The Grove on 17 in the Tamarack area of southeast Edmonton.

"We've been in Western Canada for a long, long time. It's really just in the last kind of six years that we've expanded and gotten a much broader footprint but Landmark was originally founded in Edmonton back in 1965 and moved down to Calgary at some point in its evolution," said Walker.



The most recent opening for the company was **Forster Harvard Development Corp's** Aurora, Regina's newest regional retail site located at Victoria Avenue East and the new TransCanada Highway Bypass.

"As the second largest player (to Cineplex) but a really distant second, it creates some interesting geographic opportunities for us where there's places that might not be attractive to the bigger competitor in Cineplex, they're quite attractive to Landmark," said Walker.

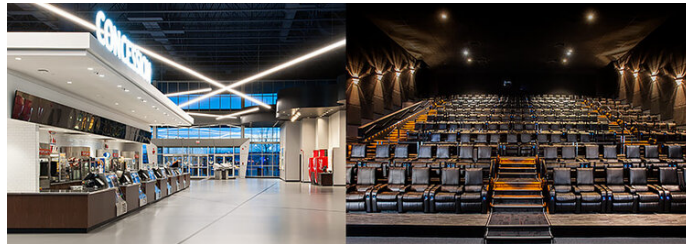
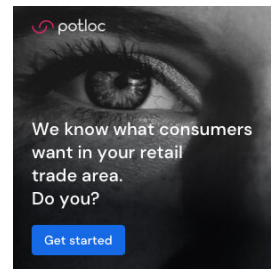


PHOTO: LANDMARK CINEMAS

"So we're trying to look at where there's a growing population and where we believe there's an under-served movie-going population that we can strategically position ourselves and so the new one we built in February of last year was up in St. Albert (Alberta) where it was an area where that population had grown to up to 80,000 people and there was no theatre in that community which is quite remarkable when you think about it. We were able to target that and get a deal done in St. Albert as our first new build in quite a while."



Walker said there's a broad range of demographics that still go to the movies.

"It really is content based. For us families and younger populations with a little bit of higher household income is obviously our target but generally speaking in the type of real estate we draw from and the vast areas that we draw from we're going to end up with all demographics being part of our mix," he said.





PHOTO: KELOWNA CAPITAL NEWS

“Everything we’ve built with our own control has been eight screens and the real differentiator Landmark has brought to the market is recliner seating. So we were the first one in Canada to lead in on recliner seating starting in Ontario before going West. That’s really been transformative both for the customer and for Landmark. In those prototypes we’re building eight screens. All reserve seating - 880 recliner seats. Every auditorium has fantastic sounds, image and just a modernized experience with a whole lot more personal space that those recliners bring.”

The company has 10 theatres in Ontario, five in Manitoba, three in Saskatchewan, with the rest in Alberta and British Columbia.

The typical size of the new theatres is about 36,000 square feet.

Walker said people these days have access to more content and more ways to consume that content.

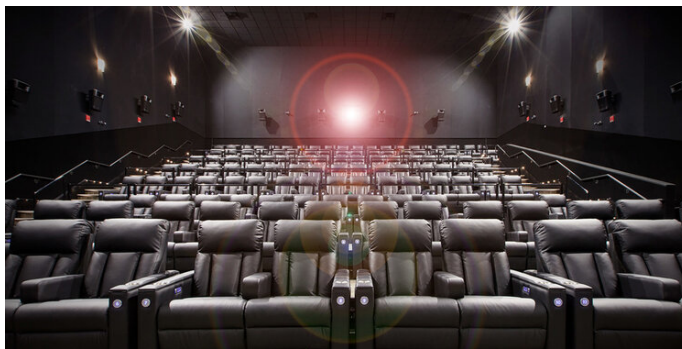


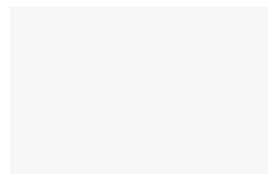
PHOTO: LANDMARK CINEMA LINKEDIN



PHOTO: LANDMARK CINEMA, REGINA

“The one universal norm that we really believe in is that there is value that’s created and there is something about that shared experience of getting out of the house and doing something that frankly watching a movie at home or watching a movie on your iPad just doesn’t deliver,” said Walker.

“I challenge you to watch a two and a half hour movie on your iPad without checking your phone or going to the bathroom or going to do something. There’s something that really is an escape of immersing in that story and there’s nothing else you’re focused on for



an hour and a half to three hours. That you're just focused on that story that's in front of you.

"As long as consumers are still social beings that d shared experiences, I think the theatre business ha long time to come."



Mario Toneguzzi, based in Calgary has 37 years of experience as a daily newspaper writer, columnist and editor.

He worked for 35 years at the **Calgary Herald** covering sports, crime, politics, health, city and breaking news, and business. For 12 years as a business writer, his main beats were commercial and residential real estate, retail, small business and general economic news. He nows works on his own as a freelance writer and consultant in communications and media relations/training. Email: mdtoneguzzi@gmail.com

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