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Rheem Theatre slated to reopen June 14

By *Sophie Braccini*



Derek Zemrak and Tom Schnurr, president of the Moraga Community Foundation, sign a management agreement for the Rheem Theatre. Photo A. Scheck

scheduled as soon as everything at the Rheem is cleaned up and inspected. Zemrak says that June and July are big months for family entertainment and he wants to open the bottom large theater as soon as possible. Next Saturday, June 2 will be a cleanup day where everyone is invited to come and support the local venue. Community support will be the key to the success of the agreements.

Pirkle said he was also excited to be working with the MCF in an effort to reopen the Rheem Theatre on June 14. The two partners say that the interim arrangement will allow theatergoers to once again walk through the front doors and infuse positive energy into the Art Deco theater. "We all hope for the eventual long-term solution that will see the beloved theater remain a vibrant and integral asset to the Moraga community for many years and generations to come," they said.

Schnurr expressed his satisfaction at the signing of the management agreement. MCF's mission is to support community assets such as the theater. He said that the MOU made the reopening possible, and he was pleased the team of Zemrak and Pirkle came back with the know-how, the community ties and hopefully the California Independent Film Festival in the fall.

Derek Zemrak and Tom Schnurr signed an agreement on Saturday, May 26 for the management of the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. Zemrak represents Zemrak Pirkle Productions, which used to manage the theater before it closed six months ago, and Schnurr is the president of the Moraga Community Foundation that is leasing the property from owner Mahesh Puri.

Zemrak explained that Puri and representatives of the foundation and his company met at Cine Cuvée in Orinda to discuss the details of the agreement. In March the town of Moraga signed a memorandum of understanding with Puri stating that he would sell the theater to the foundation for \$150,000 as he develops the vacant lot next to the theater. Prior to the completion of the sale, Puri also agreed to lease the property for \$5,000 a month for two years.

As he stepped into the theater where he had not set foot since last January Zemrak was happy at the prospect of reopening. He and Pirkle also own the Orinda Theatre and he said that their contacts with the film production studios are ongoing, meaning movies will be

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