

Application Story

Independent theaters convert to digital cinema



The Wapa Theatre has been delighting audiences since 1904.

The value of Christie technology, service and VPF program

Christie® has helped smaller, independent exhibitors move into the 21st century of entertainment by providing the world's most preferred DLP Cinema® projectors and Christie Managed Services' renowned customer service. Thanks to the Christie Virtual Print Fee (VPF) program, independent exhibitors can readily afford to convert their cinemas to digital format without unwieldy fees and restrictions.

Christie Managed Services offer a range of services from industry-leading warranties, help desk support, remote monitoring services through the Network Operations Center (NOC) and software upgrades for digital cinema equipment, to advanced parts replacement.

Through the VPF program, exhibitors receive a payment from Hollywood film producers for each digital cinema movie booked in their digital theater. These payments continue for a period of time that's tailored for each exhibitor. The payments can be used to cover the costs of equipment purchases and their integration into the theater space.

The Wapa Theatre – Wapakoneta, Ohio

Built in 1904 for stage and opera productions, the Wapa Theatre, in Wapakoneta, Ohio, converted to a movie theater in the 1920s. Its next conversion came in October 2011, when the owner, Robert Wiesenmayer, made the move from film to digital cinema using Christie products. "I was so impressed with their people, their service, and their equipment. The Christie digital cinema projector is a super product, easy to use and program, and we can upgrade as we grow," he notes.

As part of his theater's conversion to digital cinema, Wiesenmayer also chose Christie's VPF program and purchased monitoring services from Christie Managed Services.

Says Wiesenmayer, "Having reviewed a plan from another supplier that could not accommodate my single screen theater, I chose Christie because they offered many more advantages to us. Their VPF plan eliminates the complex, highly-restrictive clauses found in other plans, providing us with a wider range of financing options and greater control. Because Christie offered more options for all phases of the digitization

Customer:

- Apex Theatres
- Sierra Cinemas
- The Wapa Theatre

Partners:

- American Cinema Equipment (ACE)
- Entertainment Supply and Technologies, LLC (ES&T)
- Integrity Entertainment Solutions, LLC

Location:

California, Kentucky, Ohio, U.S.A.

Industry/Market:

Entertainment / Cinema

Requirements:

Small theater owners count on Christie's Solaria Series of projectors. Christie Managed Services support the move to digital cinema over the long run, while Christie's Virtual Print Fee program makes the move affordable.

Summary:

Christie products, services and finance plans are helping small, independent theaters across the U.S. to convert from film to digital cinema.

Products:

- Christie Solaria Series
- Christie Managed Services
- Christie Virtual Print Fee (VPF) program

Results:

Smaller independent theater owners are using Christie's Virtual Print Fee program and relying on Christie products and Managed Services to bring digital cinema to local theaters - to the delight of audiences across the U.S.

process, and as a cost-conscious exhibitor, I felt totally comfortable about my choice.”

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Robert Wiesenmayer, Owner, Wapa Theatre

Wiesenmayer brought in Entertainment Supply and Technologies, LLC (ES&T) to manage the actual conversion to digital cinema. ES&T’s Bruce Schneider, vice president of technical services, oversaw the conversion and installation. “We recommended the Christie CP2220 projector from the Christie Solaria™ series because it can provide the highest level of projection with razor-sharp images.” ES&T also installed the Christie Xenolite® lamps that work flawlessly in sync with the Christie projectors for the best digital cinema solution.

Wiesenmayer concludes “Our audiences are amazed by the quality viewing and listening experience we offer in our gem of a truly grand theater.”

Apex Theatres – Louisville, KY

Locally-owned Apex Entertainment, LLC, operates 16 screens in Louisville, Kentucky, including the Baxter Avenue Filmworks Theatre. Not a typical multiplex, it offers first-run, foreign and independent films along with 3D movies on eight wall-to-wall screen auditoriums.

“We have always had the highest regard for Christie equipment, even before we started installing their digital projectors,” says Leslie Abernson, president, Apex Theatres. Baxter has five Christie Solaria Series digital projectors with the remaining three screens scheduled for conversion by mid-2012. “We appreciate Christie’s reliability and economical operation that provide savings day in and day out.”

Says Integrity Entertainment Solutions, LLC president Gary Engvold, whose firm handled the installation, “We recommend Christie projectors because they typically use a smaller sized lamp than the competition, providing more light and using less electricity. They are known for the brightest and highest performance projectors and the lowest cost of ownership.”

Baxter contracted with Christie for their VPF program. Abernson explains, “The Christie VPF program is straightforward, and

in comparison to others, it’s the best deal out there. In terms of simple economics, we get the best return on our money because the [virtual print fees] are paid faster and we have the ability to depreciate the equipment under Christie’s self-financing program. We didn’t have to jump through hoops and deal with all sorts of restrictions.”

Sierra Cinemas – Grass Valley, CA

Mike and Barbara Getz own three cinemas, the Sierra Cinemas, in Grass Valley, California. They joined the digital revolution in 2009 with their first digital 3D projector. Following the phenomenal success of the movie, *Avatar*, the couple upgraded a second screen to digital 3D, installing a Christie CP2000-ZX. Working with Christie partner American Cinema Equipment (ACE), the owners completely digitized their other seven screens and enabled them for 3D, using Christie Solaria Series projectors.

“We chose Christie because we believed in the quality of the Christie product, the flexibility built into the projectors, the ease in using the menus, and settings that can be adjusted quickly and easily,” commented Michael LaMarca, general manager at Sierra Cinemas. LaMarca is particularly impressed with Christie’s service and support, adding, “It was an absolute major deciding factor. Christie is serious about service. They are responsive and professional.”

Sierra Cinemas also contracted for Christie’s VPF program. LaMarca explains, “We opted for the VPF program because it fit our unique circumstances, and it was a way to fast track our digital cinema conversions.”

Christie Managed Services provides Sierra Cinemas with monitoring, maintenance, support, and on-site emergency response. Scott Hicks, president and CEO at ACE, notes that “our customers appreciate the extensive after-sale support provided by Christie Managed Services. The ability to work with the NOC on a service issue 24/7/365, and receive a part next morning is a powerful aspect of the total Christie experience.”

La Marca sums it all up by saying “Christie is there when we need them. Christie represents our interests. We now have the ‘whole kit and caboodle’ and we feel pretty confident going forward.”

Contact Christie

Contact us today to find out how your theater can benefit from Christie entertainment solutions.

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