

Owner of cinema group building at Coastland Center files for bankruptcy

FLORIDA WEEKLY

Certain news outlets including the Wall Street Journal reported this week that the owner of CMX Cinemas has filed for bankruptcy protection. As previously reported in Florida Weekly, a state-of-the-art CMX Cinébstro movie theater is currently being built on the footprint of the former Sears store at Coastland Center mall in Naples.

According to an April 27 article about the bankruptcy filing from The Real Deal, which reports on real estate news, Miami-based Cinemex Holdings USA filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Miami. The company is owned by Mexico-based Grupo Cinemex SA de CV, which controls CMX Cinemas with 41 locations in the Midwest, Northeast and the South, Real Deal reported.

CMX Cinemas had planned to open new locations at Wrigleyville in Chicago; American Dream Mall in East Rutherford, New Jersey; and Coastland Center in Naples this year, according to its website.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the owner of CMX Cinemas filed for bankruptcy protection saying it needs breathing room from movie studios and landlords because of the economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement, CMX Cinemas said it had experienced a “total suspension of our business” due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to the closure of most non-essential businesses across



ERIC STRACHAN / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Workmen were on the jobsite Tuesday where the CMX Cinébstro movie theater is under construction at Coastland Center mall.



the country, the Miami Herald reported.

Florida Weekly observed construction still in progress on Tuesday at the Coastland Center theater site.

As reported by Real Deal’s Keith Larsen, Cinemex Holdings USA has \$100 million to \$500 million in both assets and liabilities, according to the bankruptcy filing. Its largest unsecured creditors are four banks: BBVA Bancom-

er, Scotia Bank, HSBC Mexico, and SAB-Capital, the bankruptcy filing showed.

The company’s real estate affiliate Cinemex USA Real Estate Holdings Inc. also filed for bankruptcy. ■

GUEST COMMENTARY

NCEF a connector of resources within Collier County during COVID-19

BY MARIA JIMENEZ-LARA

Naples Children & Education Foundation CEO



JIMENEZ-LARA

Thanks to the vision of our trustees and supporters and their belief in our cause, the Naples Children & Education Foundation is positioned as a critical lifeline and connector for nonprofit organizations in Collier County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NCEF partners with community organizations and leaders on a range of issues such as help finding resources, guidance on decision-making and identifying needs in the community. The safety net of services NCEF has developed over the past 20 years is fully deployed and the organizations we fund have mobilized quickly to meet demands that change almost daily.

NCEF’s Hunger Initiative was established in 2012 with the goal of providing nutritious food to children and families who struggle with food insecurity — the fear of not knowing where their next meal will come from. In light of recent food shortages due to increased demand, families in need must now cope with even more challenges to put food on their tables.

Harry Chapin Food Bank, one of NCEF’s partners, is the largest hunger-relief network in Southwest Florida serving Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades and Lee counties, each relying on its fleet of 17 refrigerated trucks to distribute donated food. During this challenging period, Harry Chapin has been distributing “Harry’s Helping Kits” that contain roughly 20 pounds of food and provide a family of four with meals for five days.

To reach those in need, Harry

Chapin partnered in recent weeks with another NCEF beneficiary, Boys & Girls Club of Collier County, to distribute kits and bags of food from its mobile pantry. The club closed its program operations but allowed Harry Chapin to use its Bolch Campus in Immokalee as a mobile distribution center once a week. Additionally, earlier in the crisis, the Bolch Campus and Nichols Campus in East Naples each became a drive-thru meal distribution site. For families who could not find transportation, employees delivered meals to their homes.

NCEF is working with early learning, hunger and out-of-school time partners to identify and share child-oriented resources for children and their families in Collier County. Agencies include Collier County Public Schools, Boys & Girls Club and Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. We encourage families with children to reach out to the school district for additional educational needs.

NCEF’s investments in the community have allowed such agencies to pivot their programming to virtual programming. From virtual mentoring and tutoring by phone calls, classes via Zoom, telepsychology and more, our most vulnerable children are still able to access these much-needed resources during this unprecedented time.

To make a donation to NCEF, visit www.NaplesWineFestival.com. ■

DID YOU KNOW?



SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

A bridge from the Florida Overseas Railroad still stands on the route to Key West.

There once was a train that crossed waters to Key West

Industrialist Henry Flagler had a dream of connecting the Florida Keys to the rest of the state by rail.

With construction of the Panama Canal around the turn of the last century, Flagler saw potential in Key West as the closest U.S. deep-water port to Panama. He had hoped the city could take advantage of the increased potential for trade with the West Coast of the United States, as well as Latin America.

Construction on the Florida Overseas Railroad began in 1905 and continued through 1912, when Flagler himself rode the first train from the mainland to Key West, where he was celebrated as a hero.

Builders had to struggle through three devastating hurricanes during the seven years of construction.

The project, also dubbed “Flagler’s Folly,” cost more than \$50 million and was hailed as the “Eighth Wonder of the World” because of the engineering innovations required to see it to completion.

Flagler died in 1913, and the Overseas Railroad itself did not endure.

The Labor Day hurricane of 1935 washed away 40 miles of track and the bankrupt Florida East Coast Railway was unable to rebuild it. The roadbed and bridges were sold to the state of Florida, which used them to construct the Overseas Highway for automobile traffic.

Many of those bridges were replaced in the 1980s, but you still can see the remains of the Overseas Railroad as you drive through the Keys. Many are now used as fishing piers and pedestrian walkways. ■