

HOT SET: "P.S. I LOVE YOU"

A young widow ("Black Dahlia's" Hilary Swank) gets past her grief when she finds letters from her late husband that send her on an adventure. Richard La Gravenese, who worked with Swank on Paramount's upcoming "Freedom Writers," directs the drama. (Warner Bros.)—**Christine James**

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CHAIR CHANGES AT EPR

Exhibition industry investor Entertainment Properties Trust is undergoing an executive restructuring. Company CFO Fred Kennon, who first joined the Kansas City-based firm in 1999, will be retiring from his post. At the same time, Entertainment Properties executives Gregory Silvers will assume the role of COO and Mark Peterson will be promoted to VP, CFO and treasurer. Silvers first joined the company in 1998 and has served as VP, general counsel and secretary, while Peterson worked as the VP of accounting and finance for a publicly traded food manufacturer before taking his position at Entertainment Properties two years ago. "As our success and our company have grown, the company's executive leadership requirements have evolved and increasingly must be fully focused on our investment strategy," said Entertainment Properties president and CEO David Brain about the changes. "We are implementing today a cohesive, planned expansion of our management resourcefulness to sustain our company as an industry leader."—**Francesca Dinglasan**

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GREEN IN DUBLIN, BELFAST

Dublin Cinema Group returned to profitability in its latest annual numbers, with operating profit of 250,000 euros (about US\$320,000), versus a loss of 115,000 euros (about US\$147,000). The company, run by Kevin Anderson and Leo Ward, in 2005 refurbished its Savoy and Screenplexes but also cut other costs heavily to help offset a revenue drop of 400,000 euros (about US\$512,000) that the company ascribed to competition from local operators.

Up in Northern Ireland, the Odyssey, Belfast's landmark cinema, has been purchased by Dublin-based Storm Cinemas. The former Warner Bros. Village Cinema 12-plex changed hands in a £5 million (US\$9.3 million) deal. Holdings of Storm, headed by Patrick O'Sullivan, include sites in Cavan, Limerick and Port Laoise. Storm is expanding via new-builds in Waterford and Naas, banking on Ireland's relatively strong cinema attendance (about four visits annually per capita).—**Kim Williamson**

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O CANADA: HALF-OFF TICKETS

Canada's largest theatrical chain has introduced a special deal at its Niagara

GIANT SCREEN BIZ XPANDS IN SLOVENIA



Featuring a digital giant-screen 3D projection system, moving "special effects" seats, elevating platforms, movie scents, interactive personal remote controls and electronic clouds, XpanD's flagship theatre in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana bowed May 24. Festivities included a screening of "X-Men: The Last Stand" with special effects and XpanD demos for cinema and studio executives and for nonprofit organizations considering such sites for educational purposes. XpanD, a joint venture of Slovenia's Kolosej with El Segundo, Calif.-based Edwards Technologies for its large format stereoscopic digital projection system, is headquartered in Ljubljana.—**Kim Williamson**



Square Cinemas location. The multiplex will offer moviegoers the chance to see first-run product for the discounted admissions price of C\$4.25 (US\$4.68) on all Tuesday screenings. Cineplex is launching its latest campaign in an effort to promote the upcoming slate of summer releases. "Cineplex Odeon Niagara Square Cinemas is thrilled to offer this new low Tuesday price to our guests," said company VP of communications and investor relations Pat Marshall. "Our guests can now pay a small price on Tuesdays to see great movies on the big screen."—**Francesca Dinglasan**

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CATHAY LAUNCHES MALAY SITE

Asian exhibition giant Cathay Cineplex is re-establishing its presence in Malaysia with the recent opening of a flagship theatre in the market of Mutiara Damansara. The state-of-the-art complex encompasses 10 screens and nearly 2,000 seats and is expected to draw two million visitors this year. "The opening of Cathay Cineplex Damansara is part of our expansion plan to strengthen our position in Malaysia," Cathay Organisation president of business operations Suhaimi Rafdi told local reporters attending the theatre's opening-day launch. In addition to the Damansara site, Cathay operates four other multiplexes in the territory.—**Francesca Dinglasan**

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"CARS" TAKES TO TRACK WITH DIGITAL PREMIERE EVENT

In the first event of its kind, Disney/Pixar's "Cars" on May 26 held its world premiere at the Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, N.C., in front of 38,000 fans. In an unusual industry collaboration, all three licensees of Texas Instruments' DLP Cinema technology—Barco, Christie and NEC—supplied a total of 12 digital cinema projectors for this first-ever multi-screen outdoor projection

event. Together, the three Barco D-Cine Premiere DP-100, six Christie CP2000 and three NEC NC2500S projectors delivered 240,000 combined lumens and 35 trillion colors to illuminate four custom-built 115-foot screens at turn two of the Speedway for the largest square footage delivery of a movie ever. Advance tickets for the screening were sold out well in advance of the event, which garnered huge media coverage across the nation.

"This premiere marks a major leap forward into the digital theatrical age," said Nancy Fares, business manager of DLP Cinema Products. "The transition of the industry to digital projection has reached the tipping point this year."

"Digital cinema is the future of the movie industry," added Jack Kline, president and COO of Christie. "This event confirms the enormous potential of the technology, which is playing an increasingly important role in transforming the future of the movie-viewing experience."

To cap the weekend's activities, the #96 DLP HDTV Chevrolet was wrapped as Lightning McQueen, the movie's main character, for the Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR Nextel Cup race the following Sunday.

"We are pleased to use DLP Cinema technology to bring 'Cars' to the screen in a big way," said Doug Darrow, brand and marketing manager. "As a sponsor of Hall of Fame, we couldn't be more excited that we can showcase our digital cinema technology to the NASCAR fans."

The three projector manufacturers donated the use of their equipment as well as engineering support for setup and installation. Proceeds from the event will be benefiting the Speedway Children's Charities and the Association of Hole in the Wall Gang Camps.—**Annlee Ellingson**

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