

## Civic from page A1

"They've been very generous, both he and his wife," Laubhoff said. "Those folks certainly have community spirit, and it's appreciated."

Building the shaft and lift won't disrupt theater operations. The bidding process isn't expected to take very long so officials will have time to more closely examine all aspects of the plan and watch how theater operations shake out.

### RENOVATION

Increased facility use will help the theater out of a \$29,000 deficit, which Laubhoff stressed was anticipated. The figure sits on the high end of a projected \$25,000 to \$30,000 operating loss officials expected to see, due to one-time expenses at opening and the natural learning curve of growing a business.

"We only have five months under our belts, and it's been an unusually slow period of time," he said, explaining that applied to movie houses throughout the area. "We see greater revenues in the last several months of the (fiscal) year."

An area of initial concern appears to be under control, Laubhoff reported. He has been keeping a close eye on day-to-day operations and viewing all theater-related bills, with the intent of really learning what it takes to run this type of business.

At first, he worried concession costs could take a hit through small thefts of a box of candy here or there. But theater management conducts a weekly inventory and remains close to its benchmark for profit.

"They're keeping track of what's happening over there," Laubhoff said.

In addition, the ratio of concession sales to ticket sales has steadily increased. The biggest sellers overall have been the 40-ounce popcorn and 24-ounce pop. Movie-goers looking for a sweet treat have chosen M&Ms, SnCups, Rainetta and Skittles most often.



Plans: The rear exit of the Civic Theater will be rebuilt for wheelchair access.

## Parking from page A1

is attempting to address. The long-term viability of the city-owned Civic is at least partially hinged on a solution.

"People can use it to go to the theater," Laubhoff said. "It's for anybody who's a customer in those shops."

Employees such as Salon LEGATO's John Barber are being asked to park in the public parking lot at the Farmington Training Center, about two blocks east of the salon. But, except for special circumstances such as heavy snowfall, he doesn't think employees of the stores have made it a habit of pulling into premium parking spaces adjacent to their businesses.

"When there's bad weather, employees (from all of the stores) park right up front," Barber said. "If (the ordinance) will be nice, because too many times clients have to drive around and park illegally. It's definitely needed."

Suzanne Loiselle, owner of Suzanne's Boutic Gallery, said the ordinance will help protect customers, to ensure better-available parking whenever they come to the stores and shops.

"Right now, we're getting some complaints that customers are inconvenienced by the parking situation," said Loiselle, adding that the ordinance is something that the businesses are looking forward to seeing take effect.

Loiselle, however, said her

employees typically park "along the back," and that the businesses recently have been more cohesive about the issue.

"In the last couple years all of us have made a joint effort to not park in the front spaces," she said. "So it's working out pretty good."

Jim Rue at Marketing Communications Counsel said the ordinance is something that most merchants agree with. But Rue pointed out one theory, that some part-time employees might inadvertently park up front, perhaps not attuned to the lack of downtown parking.

"We're trying to address a unique downtown with a unique solution," Laubhoff said. "Sometimes, we'll be successful and sometimes we won't. But this one, I think is a positive step."

"We can't expand the parking lot, so we have to bite the bullet sometimes," noted SALON LEGATO's Barber, alluding to the cramped downtown district.

The ordinance was recommended to the council following a study made by the city's Traffic and Safety Board. Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss, a member of the board, interviewed employees and customers about such an ordinance.

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