

We are owners of the small, two-screen movie Redwood Theater in Brookings, Oregon. It has been our family business since 1999, although it has been in operation in Brookings since 1909. The Redwood Theater is the primary source of entertainment for our community. Not only are we a movie theater, but we are a venue for large groups and live productions. We actively support our youth and non-profits throughout the year and our customers do the same for us.

The pandemic has been difficult for everyone, but especially industries such as ours. We were forced to shut down completely from March 19 to August, only to open at a 25% capacity with many limitations on seating. Then we had to completely shut down again just before the busiest time of the year, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We opened again with 25% capacity on January 15, 2021. We will once again be shutting down completely on March 26 because our county has moved into extreme risk. Normally we are open seven days a week, but during the pandemic, we have closed our doors on Mondays and Tuesdays. We have done what we can to minimize the blow, for example, selling popcorn to go and renting out to families, but our overhead has been debilitating.

Prior to March 2020, we employed fourteen part-time employees prior to the shutdown and now we are down to seven. Our employees are loyal, but some have been struggling to make ends meet. Because some have moved on, when we are at full capacity, we will have to re-hire and train new employees.

Another impact that the pandemic has had on the industry, but is not within the control of the state, is that the film production companies are not releasing films to theater as they normally do. The creation of movies has taken a hit, but also films are going straight to streaming services because people are at home and not going to theaters in person. It is questionable whether this will have a long-term impact on the theater industry, but if theaters across the country shut down, it is certain that the days of going on dates to the movies will be over.

We are hoping that our representatives will be helpful in crafting ways for us to get funding to weather this storm. If theaters can make it through these times, then we will be saving the gems of our small towns. We fully understand the necessity of keeping the citizens of Oregon safe and healthy and hope, like everyone else, that we get through this sooner rather than later. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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