

After 20 years, curtains to rise in Bozeman's Rialto Theater once more

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BOZEMAN - Bozeman's Rialto has been closed for 20 years.

But now, new owners are giving the old theater new life.

Architect and developer Erik Nelson and his partners purchased the Rialto about a year ago. The plan is to have a theater where more than 100 seats and retractable seating of up to 300 people.

"Our intentions right now is to bring back the historic 1920's facade, so kind of an art deco facade that was originally on the building," said Nelson.

Old photos give an idea of what the facade will look like.

This is the second major renovation Nelson and his partners have undertaken. They recently remodeled a dilapidated motel and turned it into the Lark Motel.

"Finding an asset that's underutilized in the city of Bozeman - this was a great case," said Nelson. "It's been shuttered and it hasn't been used for some number of years and (we hope to) bring it back to life in the way that it should be for the present day that we live in."

Nelson and his partners say they're eyeing other projects downtown.

"It's no secret Bozeman's downtown is a gem and we see this as an opportunity for us to be able to contribute to that," said Nelson. "We're excited to be a part of it."

The new Rialto Theater is scheduled to open in the fall of 2017.



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