

BULLETIN

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Nostalgia-Influenced LED Signage

In 1909, **Gus Kerasotes** opened a storefront nickelodeon in Springfield, Ill. A century later, Kerasotes is one of the largest movie theater chains in the Midwest, with 853 screens in 95 locations—and counting.

Despite the burgeoning growth, the company still seeks to pay homage to its roots. So when Kerasotes acquired a group of Illinois theaters and needed to convert signage, company officials saw an opportunity to create a look that was both nostalgic and brand new—a design that then could be applied to the entire chain. To do that, Kerasotes turned to another business with a proud legacy in the movie theater business: West Allis, Wis.-based **Poblocki Sign Company**. Since 1932, Poblocki has built more than 100 movie marquees.

“Our company knew Poblocki was the right signage vendor for the project because they have national service and support, making it easy for them to accommodate our signage requests anywhere,” says Mike Policicchio, director of construction for Kerasotes.

Kerasotes challenged Poblocki to design new signage that would help increase its presence in the marketplace. Poblocki’s design team went to work infusing a classic marquee look with the Kerasotes brand color scheme.

The result was a design reminiscent of early 20th-century theaters using 21st-century **Tetra LEDs** from **GE Lumination** in a pattern that resembled the small lamps used in old marquees.

“The intensity from the LEDs’ bright lights was exactly what Kerasotes was looking to have for our signage to stand out and attract customers,” stated Policicchio.

Around the same time, one of Kerasotes’ latest acquisitions in Chicago, a former AMC theater on Western Avenue, posed an additional challenge. With a parking garage facing Interstate 94, the theater has a high profile, and Kerasotes and Poblocki were eager to use the new LED concept to provide drivers with maximum exposure to the garage.

Typically, each letter contains 40 to 50 LEDs in a computer-generated pattern. For the new Chicago location, however, Poblocki completed the layout for each letter manually to maximize the brightness on each letter.

The City North 14 signage project took 600 hours to complete, including design, survey work, production planning, manufacturing and installation.

As Kerasotes keeps growing, Poblocki intends to be there building new state-of-the-art marquees that recall the grand theater tradition. Together, the two companies will continue to make movie marquee history.

—*Tiffany Wynn*



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