

# Then and now: Movie theaters always changing

South shore's first two movie theaters, circa 1949, were at Stateline.



The original Lakeside Theater. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

One was the quonset-hut Lakeside Theater where the Park Tahoe Inn now stands, and opposite on Highway 50 was the original Tahoe Drive-In Theater behind Cecil's Market, which was always showing two features.

The drive-in moved to what became Glenwood Way in Bijou in the mid-1950s. A large new



Lakeside Theater in the 1990s. Photo/Bill Kingman

Lakeside Theater was built in 1963 at highways 50 and 89 near the South Tahoe Y. In the late 1970s, that single-screen theater was partitioned into four small auditoriums and

screens.

For a period, it was a one-man show. Bob Retzer had acquired the Lakeside, and then he opened the single-screen Tahoe Cinema across the street. It was sandwiched in the corner between Kmart and Raley's in the South Y Center.



A 1996 ad in the Tahoe Daily Tribune for the six Wallace screens.

He also opened the tiny Stateline Cinema on Park Avenue facing Raley's. Additionally, in the 1970s and early 1980s,



CVS at the Y today.  
Photo/Bill Kingman

Retzer as concessionaire ran first-run films in the huge dinner-theater showroom of the Sahara-Tahoe/High Sierra where waiters served drinks and where Retzer greeted patrons nightly in his tuxedo. Customers sat in luxurious padded booths.

And finally, Retzer also operated the Tahoe Drive-In Theater which closed in 1984.

Wallace Theatres acquired the Retzer theaters, but ultimately closed them and moved into the eight new movie auditoriums which the Horizon at Stateline had created by sub-dividing its historic showroom.

The Lakeside building at the Y next to today's McDonald's was demolished in the late 1990s and a Office Depot opened on

that site. It was fairly short-lived. It was replaced by Long's Drugs, and now CVS. In the early 2000s, the new eight-screen Heavenly Village Cinema opened, which along with the Horizon's eight-plex, placed all South Shore movies back at Stateline.

However, as reported by *Lake Tahoe News* on March 4, the Horizon is changing management and their eight movie screens are closing at the end of March.



Entrance to the theater at Horizon. Photo/Bill Kingman

Historically, there also were theaters at Meeks Bay, Kings Beach, Brockway, and Tahoe City, all now gone. In the 1980s

there was a twin-screen drive-in movie at the bottom of Spooner at Highway 395, about where Trader Joe's now stands.

– *Bill Kingman*