



IN THE SUNFLOWER CINEMA, waiting for the movie to start Friday night, Hannah Jones (above) snacked on some popcorn. Dave Bose (below) got bags of popcorn out from the counter to start making the treat.



AT THE FRONT DOOR of the new Sunflower Cinema, Megan Carter sold a ticket to Linda Manning while her daughter Clayton waited to stamp Ms. Manning's hand.

Families show support for Sunflower Cinema

Sold out shows and double the people have marked the opening months at the new Sunflower Cinema.

The theater opened its doors the Friday after Thanksgiving. Since then, it's had 25 shows so far, said school Superintendent Duane Dorshorst, who serves on the board, with nine being sold out.

At the old theater, they averaged around 100 people a weekend for two shows, he said, and sometimes there were fewer than 50 people for both.

Now the movie shows three times a weekend and he estimated they're averaging around 200 people for the three.

Normally, a movie shows at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday. A few popular movies have shown at special times. For instance, the blockbuster hit "Avatar" showed in 3D five times the weekend it was booked.

Mr. Dorshorst said the board works with a broker in Kansas City to get films. The broker has most of the theaters in Kansas, especially the smaller ones.

"Since we are a small, one-screen theater, we almost never get the opportunity to get a first run," he added.

The board tells the broker what they want and what they are interested in getting and they get some choices on the dates to play them.

They choose movies based on what's popular, what the people say they want to see and if it works for families. While they try not to run too many R rated movies, they also want to keep their adult crowd coming to the theater.

If a group requests a specific movie and they can get it, that group may have to pay a guarantee, usually \$250 to \$350. If a group or club wants to have a private showing, they can do that for a minimum of \$100 or 20 people for a regular movie. For a 3D movie, it costs \$125, said Mr. Dorshorst.

He added that they are still work-



DAWSON KEMPT tried his hand at air hockey before the movie started at the Sunflower Cinema on Friday night.

ing on rental prices for the building and the equipment for conferences or presentations.

While the new theater is still operated by the cinema board, it's owned by the Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corp. Members are Bev Reiter, Kayla Bose, Susan May, Brian Simonsson, Jan Badsy and Mr. Dorshorst.

The new theater continues to be volunteer operated, as was the old one. Mr. Dorshorst said they limit the number of volunteers to four per showing. At least one needs to be an adult; volunteers take tickets, run the concession stand and clean up afterward.

Anyone interested in helping can e-mail sunflowercin@gmail.com.

People can also e-mail questions to that address about renting the building, he said.

Sunflower Cinema has a Facebook, said Mr. Dorshorst, and as of Friday it had 103 fans. There is so a website at www.sunflowercinema.com which Natasha Carmen and her brother David paid to set up. The site shows the movies coming up.

According to the site, it will be "Alvin and the Chipmunks" again this weekend; "Sherlock Holmes," on Friday, Feb. 5, Saturday, Feb. 6 and Sunday Feb. 7, and "It's Complicated" the weekend of Valentine's Day.

While the theater is up and functioning, a few things remain to do, including hanging the doors on two of the stalls in the women's bathroom, and locking cabinets and the short-order kitchen area still needs to be finished.

"The people have been very appreciative," he said, "and very patient with us as we try to figure out the best way to deal with the new equipment and large crowds. As with anything new, we have had some growing pains, but as we get more accustomed to the new theater, I think things will smooth out."

He added that the front part of the theater is open from 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays so kids can come in after school, play games and get a snack.