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THE VIOLENT STORMS THAT ROLLED THROUGH PARTS OF NORTH CAROLINA EARLIER THIS WEEK COULD BRING ON THE CLOSING CREDITS FOR SOME DRIVE IN THEATERS ACROSS THE STATE.

THERE ARE FOUR REMAINING IN NORTH CAROLINA, SOME SAW DAMAGE FROM STORMS THIS WEEK, INCLUDING HOUND'S DRIVE-IN IN CLEVELAND COUNTY, WHERE THEIR NEW MOVIE SCREEN WAS LEFT IN SHAMBLES.

BUILT ON THE GROUNDS OF AN ABANDONED MILL, HOUND'S DRIVE-IN THEATER HAD BEEN BEATING THE ODDS BEFORE THE PANDEMIC AND THIS WEEK'S STORM, A RURAL ANACHRONISM IN A WORLD OF MEGAPLEXES AND STREAMING VIDEOS.

BUT OPERATING ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST BELOVED CULTURAL ICONS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LABOR OF LOVE.

SOME 4,000 OUTDOOR MOVIE THEATERS LIT UP THE EVENING SKY ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN THE 1950S, ACCORDING TO DRIVEINMOVIE.COM.

TODAY, ONLY ABOUT 320 DRIVE-INS REMAIN STANDING ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IN NORTH CAROLINA, JUST FOUR OUTDOOR THEATERS IN ALBEMARLE, HENDERSON, KINGS MOUNTAIN AND SHELBY WERE IN BUSINESS WHEN GOV. **ROY COOPER** IMPOSED HIS STAY-AT-HOME ORDER. HOW MANY WILL BE LEFT WHEN IT'S OVER REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

DRIVE-IN SEASON USUALLY STARTS AT MID-MARCH, PICKS UP IN MAY AND PEAKS IN JULY BEFORE CLOSING DOWN IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER, ACCORDING TO DRIVEINMOVIE.COM.

INDOOR CINEMAS ARE ALSO REELING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS, AND FOR SOME OF THEM, TIME HAS SIMPLY RUN OUT.

OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS, THE OWNERS OF CINEMARK THEATERS IN BUNCOMBE, GUILFORD, MECKLENBURG, RANDOLPH, ROWAN AND WAKE COUNTIES HAVE INFORMED THE N.C. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE THAT THEY ARE CLOSING PERMANENTLY.

LIKE THE STATE'S FOUR DRIVE-INS, CINEMARK HAD COMPETED WITH OTHER BIG-BOX THEATERS AND HAD TO DEAL WITH THE CORONAVIRUS AND THE STREAMING TREND. A TOTAL OF 271 EMPLOYEES ARE AFFECTED BY CINEMARK'S IN-STATE LAYOFFS.

YOU CAN FIND THIS STORY AND MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO
THE CORONAVIRUS IN NORTH CAROLINA BY GOING TO
CAROLINA-PUBLIC-PRESS-DOT-ORG.*

THIS IS STEPHANIE CARSON REPORTING.