



The first time I walked into the new Broadway Metro expansion a few months back, I couldn't believe my eyes. It felt as though I'd tripped through the wardrobe into Narnia.

One minute I'm outside on regular old Willamette Street, looking at a nondescript, boarded-up façade where the old Scan Design furniture store used to be, and the next I'm standing inside the protean bloom of a cool new movie theater.

It felt like magic. I didn't realize the innards of a city block contained so much space and so much possibility.

Construction workers clomped by or stood hovering on ladders amid the stacked building materials and coils of cord on the floor. Tapping and drilling and the scratch of things being moved echoed across the ceiling. The air smelled of fresh angles.

But what struck me most of all was the impression of space opening up into more space, ample and yet cozy, and the crackle of opportunity it held — like the crackle of the first reel being fed into a projector's sprockets.

Over the course of several weeks, I would check in with Edward Schiessl, the Metro's managing director and the dreamer and driving force behind this massive project, which more than doubles in size the existing Metro on Broadway. As Schiessl led me on regular tours of the space, I had the sense of watching a scene fill in frame by frame: first a theater with no seats, and then, next week, a theater with seats, and suddenly a theater with a screen.

And now — now, after months in the making, it's finally complete, and Eugene moviegoers are in for a surprise: a bigger, better Metro, at once ultra-modern and vividly nostalgic, a tribute to the hypnotic pull and artistic endurance of cinema itself.

I caught up with Schiessl on the eve of the Broadway Metro's grand opening, to be held Friday, July 19, to get the scoop on what's up with the new digs, and what we can expect.