

Michigan Film Office Advisory Council
July 31, 2009

- I. Call to order
 - a. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Emery King (9:38 AM) at the Traverse City Opera House in Traverse City, Michigan.
 - b. A quorum was present with the following members: Jim Burnstein, Xenia Castillo-Hunter, Hopwood DePree, Marcia Fishman, Cory Jacobson, Emery King, Sue Marx, Michael Moore and Marc Prey. Also present was Janet Lockwood, Director of the Michigan Film Office.
 - c. Unable to attend were: Bill Black, Bob Brown, Danialle Karmanos and Tim Magee.
- II. Introduction of Members
 - a. Chairman Emery King thanked members of the public and members of the council for being present. Chairman King also thanked the Traverse City Film Festival for hosting this event.
 - b. Members of the Michigan Film Office Advisory Council introduced themselves.
- III. Adoption of Agenda
 - a. Motion made and duly supported to adopt the agenda for July 31, 2009. Passed unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes from May 1, 2009
 - a. Motion made and duly supported to adopt the minutes of March 19, 2009. Passed unanimously.
- V. Director's Report
 - a. Overview
 - i. Since our May meeting, Treasury has received an additional 8 Michigan Business Tax returns with attached Certificates of Completion. This brings the total to 25, with 22 projects receiving their checks or assignments. Approximate refunds/credits issued for 2008 projects: just over \$30 million.

We have received an additional 35 applications for the incentive program for a total so far in 2009 of 75. Of those 75, 33 have been approved, 20 have been denied (usually for lack of complete financial records), several have rescheduled for 2010, one went to Pittsburgh, one to Georgia and the rest are in some stage of review or on hold by their own requests. Jackie has put a list of the films in your folders.

We now have a new Inclusive Production Incentive Packet on the website. This includes over 20 pages of what is eligible or ineligible for the incentive. Very helpful for filmmakers, accountants, studio executives, and more.

- b. Production

- i. Since we last met, the film STONE has completed shooting in Michigan. This movie starred Robert DiNero and Edward Norton and filmed extensively in Jackson Prison, Ann Arbor, the Dexter area and elsewhere in the metropolitan area. Tony Garcia and I stayed up all night recently to watch the burning of Robert DiNero's character's home outside of Dexter.

THE IRISHMAN has also wrapped; Ken Droz and I spent some time on one of their sets down at the Detroit Docks.

The television series "Hung" shot extensively all spring, and premiered on HBO in June, to excellent reviews. If they are picked up for another 8 episodes, we expect them back.

A new reality show, "Crash Course", filmed for some weeks on Belle Isle and hired probably more crew than any movie. They premiere on ABC in August and plan to be back to shoot more in October. "Monster Garage" continues shooting in Detroit.

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE, a crime drama starring 50 Cent filmed for several weeks in Grand Rapids, a successful shoot, with a very gracious 50 Cent giving interviews and talking with kids. That producer was extremely impressed by everything Michigan and plans to return as soon as possible.

FLIPPED, the new Rob Reiner-helmed film starring Anthony Edwards, Aidan Quinn, John Mahoney, Rebecca deMornay and many others, is in production in the Ann Arbor area.

ANNABELLE AND BEAR is in prep in the metro Detroit area. PIRANHA, our first full post production approval, is working with Grace & Wild in multiple locations - this is a 3D post production job, very high tech, and we are all pleased to see it here.

RED DAWN, a remake of the Patrick Swayze cult classic, is in prep already and will be shooting entirely in Michigan, various locations.

THE GENESIS CODE is in prep, very near shooting time, in Lowell. THE BASS MASTER is crewing up in the Petoskey area. The documentary WOODEN BOATS is also filming in the Petoskey area.

The year has been busy. We list all approved projects on the website under Made in Michigan, Coming Soon. Once the project

has opened a MI production office, we list local contact information.

c. Office Updates

- i. The Production Directory continues to grow but sadly, we have lost our Production Directory manager, Katy Rogers. She made the decision to return to school and become a nurse. We will be replacing her but under current hiring rules for the State, we can interview only current State employees or laid-off State employees.

The Locations Department continues their stellar work. For the Film Office Reel Scout site, we now have 19 location scouts, 49 convention bureaus and 9 city/county offices with their own passwords and access to download local pix for wide exposure. The Locations Department has sent out 37 new photo packages since our last meeting and there have been 21 scouts. Additionally, Mike Grabemeyer has just put together a new program so that any citizen can download up to 10 of their photographs to our website - please see the website for details.

Staff continues to take speaking engagements, do television, radio and print interviews, and set visits. Since our last meeting, a partial list includes the Eaton County Commission on Technology; Okemos Public Library; UP City Managers Spring Meeting in St. Ignace; a Panel for the DWIFF; 'Michigan Makes Movies' Expo panel in Novi; Wayne State University Alumni/Student Event; Acting for the Camera, U of M; the 50th Anniversary of the Making of 'Anatomy of a Murder', Marquette and Big Bay, panelist, speaker; Senate Commerce Committee in Saugatuck; several movie premieres; annual National Association of Theatre Owners meeting; television tapings with Senator Patty Birkholz and Senator Glenn Anderson; meeting with Rep. Mary Valentine, held in Lowell; and the opening of the inaugural West Branch Children's Film Festival.

We also attended and sponsored the Waterfront Film Festival in Saugatuck and the Detroit Windsor International Film Festival in Detroit. And of course, this festival. The director attended an event presented by the Anti Defamation League in Birmingham, honoring Mike Binder, a local boy made good in Hollywood.

Re Infrastructure, nothing has changed. All of the projects are moving forward at varying speeds and we are still hoping for some new stages before the snow falls. (sorry)

I'll briefly address various rumors that are out there by saying the incentive program remains exactly as it has been, no changes, no caps. While there is a small contingent of naysayers, I believe the program will continue as it is, bringing hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars into the State.

VI. Workforce Report

- a. After months of interviews, which included re-opening the position, we have found our man. As he is not yet an official state employee and I did not want to ask him to foot hotel and gas bills with no hope of reimbursement, however he still came up here on his own. His name is Richard Jewell and he has extensive experience in both the development of curriculum and the film industry. The interview panel of Liza Estlund Olson of DELEG (with whom Richard will be working closely), Mike Shore of MEDC Communications and me were unanimous in our decision. Richard begins work August 10th. He has said he will make time to find all of you and introduce himself long before our next meeting. We will also arrange meetings between Richard and our subcommittee on Work Force Development and with IATSE. We are all extremely happy to finally fill this position.
- b. Chairman King asked members of the council if they had any questions regarding either of the reports and stated that this issue has been very important to Jim Burnstein and asked him to say a few words.
- c. Jim Burnstein discussed modeling our curriculum after that of New Mexico, and that their programs success was largely from the involvement of the IATSE union. We need a program that is certified by the state that we can send students to and guide them in the right direction to ensure that our crew base is growing and jobs are being created.
- d. Chairman King asked Richard Jewell to come up and say a few words.
- e. Richard Jewell discussed his background with the state racing commission, Michigan State University and his roles in the film industry as an actor and producer. He discussed that his mission is to come up with a program that will get people jobs.
- f. Sue Marx touched on why we often model ourselves after Louisiana and New Mexico, because they are incentive states that are so successful.
- g. Chairman King also noted that although their percentages are lower than Michigan's, the industry continues to thrive there.

VII. Traverse City Film Festival Report

- a. Chairman King discussed that the council is both blessed and honored to be at the Traverse City Film Festival this year and wanted to ask Michael Moore to say a few words.
- b. Michael Moore discussed that this is the fifth year of the festival and mentioned some specifics of the festival's success. He discussed that the festivals goals are to not only to increase film literacy in the state but to also stimulate the local economy and showcase the beauty there is to offer in Michigan. He also discussed the re-opening of the State Theater and

how it has positively affected downtown Traverse City. He extended an open invitation to anyone who wanted to talk to either himself or Deb Lake of the Traverse City Film Festival on how they have grown the festival and the State Theater over the years. Moore thanked the council for their continued support of the industry and for the opportunity to discuss the festival and the theater.

- c. Chairman King thanked Michael for his eloquent words, and on behalf of this council stated that we are blessed to his have guidance and leadership in this area as well as Hopwood and all of the council members. Chairman King thanked him for all the things he has been doing for the state and for the industry.
- d. Jim Burnstein thanked Michael for the opportunities he and the festival have provided to his students at the University of Michigan.
- e. Marcia Fishman announced that SAG Indy is up at the festival this year for the first time and she was very excited to get back and hear their feedback.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Chairman King asked the council if there was any old business to report on.
- b. Marcia Fishman notified the council that Representative Miller has written a resolution that they are using as a tool to try and encourage commercial production in the state.

IX. New Business

- a. Chairman King asked the council if there was any new business to report.
- b. Marc Prey discussed meetings he had over in recent weeks which involved producers who were discussing rumors about the films still having a difficult time receiving their money.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said that is untrue, as numbers from her earlier report will state, people are being paid.
 - ii. Xenia Castillo-Hunter also noted that whenever she hears those rumors she directs the people to the Michigan Film Office to get the correct answers.

X. Public Comments

- a. Theres Pachesay is a writer and wanted to know what was being done to help writer's facilitate their projects in the state.
 - i. Jim Burnstein said you have to write the best screenplay you can and then get a manager and agent to help you get your foot in the door. He offered to discuss it in more detail after the meeting.
- b. Alan LaFave wanted to know what film festivals can do to help advocate and be a catalyst for attracting film production in Michigan.
 - i. Cory Jacobson mentioned his involvement in the Jewish Film Festival and how it has grown over the years and draws attention to the industry and the community.
 - ii. Hopwood DePree touched on the fact that we can use it as an opportunity to bring in filmmakers and let them see what Michigan has to offer.

- c. Representative Gary McDowell from the 107th House District wanted to say thank you for all that has been done and to voice the support of the legislators who were behind the program.
- d. Peter Payetta with Interlochen Public Radio wanted to know the number of local crew that were hired on Gran Torino as well as why the Mackinac Center has criticized the lack of information available to the public and wanted to know why some of the information is kept secret.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said that nothing is kept secret except the confidential taxpayer information. She also said that she could get Peter the information regarding Gran Torino but that she did not know those figures off the top of her head.
- e. Esme Bloomquist asked what the best way to get into the industry was.
 - i. Chairman King suggested talking to some council members individually after the meeting.
- f. Barbara Silkworth with Miller Canfield asked how a law firm can become involved in the industry.
 - i. Janet Lockwood suggested getting listed in the Production Directory on the Michigan Film Office website.
- g. Ann Lakton is a high school teacher and wanted to voice her support for the program and also said not to forget the high school students when developing workforce curriculum.
- h. David Clawson wanted to know if there were any incentives for developing a film curriculum in a public school.
- i. Jan Morrison wanted to know how council members formed their production companies and what kind of films they make.
 - i. Sue Marx suggested talking after the meeting but said that she started her company up by writing grants to various arts organizations.
 - ii. Hopwood DePree also volunteered to discuss after the meeting.
 - iii. Chairman King also volunteered to discuss after the meeting.
- j. Ken George thanked Michael Moore for putting Traverse City on the map. He also noted that the industry could look into subtitles and the fact that they can be difficult to read, especially as the population ages.
- k. Matt Kinne is a local filmmaker who wanted to apply for the incentives and wanted to know if there was a way you can sell or purchase a portion of that rebate to a bank.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said that is not done through the state however a number of filmmakers have borrowed against it with local financial institutions.
- l. Colin Butrum is a transportation coordinator that came back from Hollywood and voiced his support and also proposed eventually changing the percentage a production receives for an out of state resident to a lower number in the future.
- m. Billy Whitehouse had questions about a potential cap and if video games qualified under the incentives.

- i. Janet Lockwood said there have been no changes in the incentive since it was passed last year and that video games are covered. We have only received three video game applications so far but want to expand that number.
- n. Dave Olson said that Michael Moore was understating the impact that the festival and the State Theater have had on the Traverse City area. He asked if the program has been looked at by other committees, for example the SFA.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said the SFA does not think the program is bringing in much.
- o. Stacey Livingston from the Purple Rose Theater wanted to thank the council for offering their advice and wisdom on how to get involved.
- p. Adam Reid stated that he was proud to be a volunteer of both the State Theater and the festival and thanked the council for doing this.
- q. Letha Cairns wanted to know if any sound stages were planned.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said three have been approved so far and there is also 10 West in Manistee, Michigan
- r. Susan Applegate wanted to know if the incentives applied to all budgets.
 - i. Janet Lockwood said any budget with a minimum spend of \$50,000 can qualify for the incentives.

XI. Adjournment (11:23 AM)

- a. Chairman King thanked everyone for attending and those who assisted in organizing the meeting. Chairman King discussed getting details out for the next meeting tentatively scheduled for mid October at a location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Emery King, Chairman

Prepared by:

Jackie Wressell