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Illinois Filmmakers Encouraged to Enter Work in State's Short Film Competition

Fifth Year for Illinois Film Office Shortcuts Competition

CHICAGO – Illinois filmmakers who are looking for the next big break are invited to enter their work in the 2012 Shortcuts competition which kicks off today. In its fifth year, Shortcuts is a statewide short film competition sponsored by the Illinois Film Office and designed to encourage growth in Illinois' film industry. In order to take part in the contest entrants must be Illinois residents over the age of 18 or students over the age of 18 who attend Illinois colleges and universities. The winner will receive a cash prize and the winning film will be screened during the Chicago International Film Festival this fall.

“The Shortcuts Competition is now in its fifth year and we want this year to be bigger and better than ever. There is a tremendous amount of talent in Illinois with respect to filmmaking and Shortcuts is an opportunity for those up and coming filmmakers to display those talents,” said Betsy Steinberg, Managing Director of the IFO, which is a division of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

Participants may use any format – film, video, graphics and/or animation – to tell a narrative story, a documentary or free form visual expression of ideas. Submissions must be 15 minutes or less in running time. Entries will be judged by a panel of film industry professionals. Submissions will be accepted today, Thursday, March 1 through August 31st. More information on the *Shortcuts* contest and the Illinois Film Office can be found at www.illinoisfilm.biz.

Last year's winner was the short film "A Certain Breed" directed by Chicago-resident Scott Smith and produced by John Fromstein. The film is a humorous look at a pair of overzealous volunteers at an animal shelter. It stars Emily Wilson and Brad Morris, veterans of the Chicago improvisation scene and was screened as part of last year's Chicago International Film Festival.

Illinois' film industry saw a record \$161 million in spending in 2010, which topped the \$155 million in spending in 2007 and represents a 54 percent increase from 2009. In 2011, the state hosted another big blockbuster, *Man of Steel*, TVseries *Boss* and *Playboy Club*, as well as numerous independent films and television shows, and a thriving commercial production industry.

DCEO and the IFO are dedicated to advancing Illinois' reputation as a world-class film destination. The IFO promotes and markets the state as an ideal shooting location for films, television shows and commercials. The IFO also promotes and encourages the training and hiring of Illinois residents who represent the diversity of the state's population.