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Illinois Film Office Launches Fourth Annual Shortcuts Competition

Winning entry receives cash prize, premiere at the 2011 Chicago International Film Festival

CHICAGO – The Illinois Film Office (IFO) today launched its fourth annual Shortcuts contest, a statewide short film competition designed to encourage growth in Illinois' film industry. Shortcuts is open to all Illinois residents over the age of 18 and 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 in October.

“Shortcuts is gaining more and more recognition as a great opportunity for up-and-coming Illinois filmmakers to showcase their talent and gain greater exposure. At the same time, it provides the film office with another great tool for promoting Illinois' exceptional film industry,” said Betsy Steinberg, Managing Director of the IFO, which is a division of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). “I encourage filmmakers of all levels of experience to participate in this year's competition, which we anticipate will be bigger and better than ever.”

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 must be postmarked by August 1st, 2011. Additional contest rules and details can be found at www.illinoisfilm.biz.

Last year's winner was the short film "Arithmetic Lesson" by Wenhwa Ts'ao. The 15-minute dramatic film depicts the story of Gracie, a seven-year-old Chinese American girl, who finds courage to defy and survive the traumatic abuse of her caretaker.

Over the last few years, Illinois' film industry has produced record spending in the state. As Illinois' economy rebounded from the recession in 2010, the state hosted big budget projects like "Transformers 3", "The Dilemma", "Contagion" and "The Chicago Code," as well as numerous smaller projects. The state is already seeing positive momentum in 2011 with a number of TV pilots and movies in the works.

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.

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