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Governor Blagojevich Appoints Film Production Veteran as New Illinois Film Office Director

*Will Continue Aggressive Efforts to Revitalize the Film and Television
Industry in Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD – Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today named a new Managing Director for the Illinois Film Office to continue to advance the state’s aggressive efforts in support of the film industry in Illinois. The Governor tapped Betsy Steinberg, an industry veteran with vast experience in television and filmmaking production, who will work to attract more film and television projects to Illinois, which will help bring even more jobs and revenue to the state. Steinberg replaces Brenda Sexton, who is leaving the Administration after a successful tenure, which saw the start the film industry’s revival in Illinois. The Illinois Film Office is part of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Governor’s lead economic development agency.

“It’s my pleasure to welcome Betsy Steinberg to the Illinois Film Office. Her extensive industry expertise, both on the creative and business side, will be valuable as we build on the momentum we’ve generated over the last three years and continue growing the film industry in Illinois. With our tremendous cities, locations, actors and crews, Illinois has everything Hollywood productions are looking for, and, with our recently expanded tax credit, Illinois is as competitive as ever. And my thanks to Brenda Sexton for her years of service and dedication in developing this important industry in Illinois,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

Ms. Steinberg has 18 years of experience in television and film production. She has produced, written, supervised and directed various documentaries and documentary series and produced numerous commercials. Most recently, Steinberg served as the Vice President of Development for Towers Productions, a leading and award-winning documentary and entertainment production company based in Chicago. In this capacity, she wrote and pitched new series and show ideas to leading networks, including A&E, the History Channel, PBS, National Geographic, Court TV and MSNBC, as well as establishing international co-production relationships. Steinberg will begin on January 29th.

In 2003, Governor Blagojevich signed landmark legislation establishing a competitive film and television production tax credit, which he enhanced last summer by signing Senate Bill 2030. The new law offers a 20 percent

credit on total Illinois production spending, which includes all salary and expense costs associated with production activities taking place within the state. This can include salaries, spending with local vendors and lodging. To qualify, minimum Illinois film and television production spending would have to be greater than \$100,000 and minimum Illinois commercial production spending would have to be greater than \$50,000. It also encourages the hiring of Illinois residents from economically disadvantaged areas.

“I am thrilled to be joining the Illinois Film Office and look forward to boosting the impact and magnitude of the film and entertainment industry across the state. I believe my production and development background in the television and film business will be a strong asset, and I am grateful to Governor Blagojevich for this opportunity,” said Betsy Steinberg.

Over the last several years, a cross section of Hollywood studios have delivered the production and filming of tomorrow’s big screen hits to the state, including *The Lake House* (Warner Bros.), *Stranger Than Fiction* (Mandate Pictures), *The Break-Up* (Universal Pictures), *Batman Begins* (Warner Bros.), *The Ice Harvest* (Focus Features), *Roll Bounce* (20th Century Fox) and *Ocean’s Twelve* (Warner Bros.). The last several years have also brought more than a dozen television series to the state, including the critically acclaimed *Prison Break* (FOX Television), the state’s first dramatic television series in six years.

“Gov. Blagojevich and I have been committed to increasing the number of film and television productions across the state, which helps spur economic development and job creation. Under the new leadership of Betsy Steinberg at the Illinois Film Office, we look forward to seeing even more action and putting even more people to work both in front of the camera and behind the scenes,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.