

September 17, 2008

ILLINOIS VETERANS INVITED TO ATTEND FREE SCREENING OF "THE LUCKY ONES" IN ROCKFORD

Illinois Film Office's "Night at the Movies" Showcases New Movies Filmed in Illinois

CHICAGO – On Tuesday, September 23, Rockford-area veterans will have a chance to be among the first in the nation to see the new movie *The Lucky Ones*. The Illinois Film Office will be honoring local veterans with a free screening of *The Lucky Ones* as part of the *IFO Night at the Movies* series, a new program for people around the state to see movies shot in Illinois for free and to learn more about Illinois' bustling film industry. *The Lucky Ones* was shot throughout Illinois in 2007, accounting for more than 941 job hires and about \$4.2 million in Illinois spending.

The Lucky Ones, directed by Neil Burger and starring Rachel McAdams, Tim Robbins and Michael Peña, is the story of three soldiers' return to the United States after serving the U.S. Army in Iraq. The screening will be held at 7 p.m. on September 23 at the Showplace 16 at 8301 East State Street in Rockford. The film opens nationwide on September 26.

Seats are limited so interested veterans should rsvp to secure seats for themselves and a guest. Email responses should be sent to Julie.Morgan@illinois.gov. Veterans should include their military branch and the years they served in the military. Veterans can also rsvp by calling 312-814-3204. *The Lucky Ones* is R-rated. Children under 17 are not allowed to attend R-rated motion pictures unaccompanied by a parent or adult guardian.

"*IFO Night at the Movies* is a great opportunity to host people for a fun night out while learning about the positive economic impact film production has in our state," Illinois Film Office Managing Director Betsy Steinberg said. "*The Lucky Ones* was shot across Illinois – from Alsip to Edwardsville – using generic scenes to stand in for other states. This movie, which poured \$4 million into the Illinois economy, is another example of how effective our film tax credit is."

The film industry has a sizable impact on the Illinois economy and brings thousands of jobs to the state each year. In 2007, Illinois film productions made more than 26,500 hires in Illinois - a 110 percent increase over 2006. A number of films and television shows were produced in Illinois in 2007 including: "The Dark Knight" (Batman); "Wanted," starring Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman; "The Express" with Dennis Quaid; "Fred Claus," with Vince Vaughn; "Meet the Browns," starring Angela Bassett; "ER" (TV show), and "My Boys" (TV show). This year, movies such as "Public Enemies" starring Johnny Depp and "The Informant" starring Matt Damon have filmed in Illinois.

In 2000, Illinois began suffering a mass exodus of the film industry as other states began enacting film incentives. By 2003, the Illinois film industry had fallen to an all-time low of \$23 million. In response, Gov. Blagojevich enacted the Illinois Film Tax Credit. Since its passage, the film industry has rebounded dramatically. The film industry reached an all-time record of nearly \$155 million in 2007. This represents the single best year in the state's history - and an 80 percent increase over 2006.

"We are always looking for innovative ways to showcase and promote Illinois' film industry. The film industry brings thousands of jobs to the state each year, and millions in revenue," Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said. "I want to thank Governor Blagojevich for signing the Film Tax Credit to make these record successes possible."

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is dedicated to advancing Illinois' reputation as a world-class film destination. The Illinois Film Office, a division of DCEO, 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.

Governor Blagojevich's Opportunity Returns regional economic development strategy is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois' history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn't work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – each with a regional team that is empowered and expected to rapidly respond to opportunities and challenges. Opportunity Returns is about tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. It is about upgrading the skills of the local workforce, increasing the access to capital, opening new markets, improving infrastructure, and creating and retaining jobs. Opportunity Returns is about successfully partnering with companies and communities, both large and small, to help all of Illinois reach its economic potential.