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CONTACTS:

Marcelyn Love 217/558.1542
Alka Nayyar 312/814.0097

**Illinois Film Office announces “An Evening with Emery Long” as
winner of Illinois’ short film contest**

Movie will premiere at the 2009 Chicago International Film Festival

CHICAGO – The Illinois Film Office (IFO) today announced the winner of Illinois’ short film contest, *Shortcuts*. The winning film, “An Evening with Emery Long,” was produced by Chicago resident Laura Szymer and was made by an all-Illinois cast and crew. The film will screen as part of the Chicago International Film Festival short films program, Tuesday, October 20th at 6:15 p.m. at AMC River East 21, 322 E Illinois, Chicago.

“We introduced the *Shortcuts* competition last year as a way to engage up and coming local directors, and have been very pleased with its success thus far,” said Betsy Steinberg, managing director of the IFO. “This competition provides Illinois filmmakers with an opportunity to showcase their work, while also promoting Illinois’ bustling film industry and great talent base.”

“An Evening with Emery Long” is a comedy about an industrial carpet salesman, Emery Long, who prepares for the perfect dinner date but realizes before too long that the evening may not turn out quite as he hoped.

Szymer has produced award-winning commercials and corporate videos, but her passion is making independent films. In 2008, she produced “An Evening with Emery Long” in addition to the horror comedy, “Gargalese,” and has other films in development. Laura owns AXIOM Megamedia LLC, a full service production company located deep in the heart of Chicago.

The production was directed by Brad DeMarea. DeMarea began directing in 2004 after ten years as an award-winning art director and designer. He has since directed numerous shorts and television commercials. Currently, Brad is working on his third screenplay and pursuing feature film opportunities. “An Evening with Emery Long” marks Brad’s debut as both writer and director.

Shortcuts was designed to encourage filmmakers across the state to explore their creativity and showcase their skills. All Illinois residents over the age of 18 and students over the age of 18 who attend Illinois colleges and universities were invited to enter the competition. More information on the *Shortcuts* contest and the Illinois Film Office can be found at www.illinoisfilm.biz.

“The film industry continues to contribute richly to our economy by attracting business and providing thousands of job opportunities for Illinoisans,” said Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Warren Ribley. “The *Shortcuts* competition is another way we’re continuing to foster growth in the industry.”

The film industry has a sizable impact on the Illinois economy and brings thousands of jobs to the state each year. In 2008, Illinois film productions brought in more than \$141 million into the Illinois economy making it the second most profitable year on record.

DCEO 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.

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