



Illinois
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NEWS

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Illinois filmmakers invited to enter state's Shortcuts competition

7th year for Illinois Film Office contest honoring local talent

CHICAGO – The 7th annual Shortcuts contest kicks off today. Illinois filmmakers are invited to enter the statewide short film competition sponsored by the Illinois Film Office (IFO) and designed to showcase local production talent. 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 winning entry will receive a cash prize and will be screened during the 50th Chicago International Film Festival this October.

“We have a community of talented, unique filmmakers and we encourage them all to help make our seventh Shortcuts Competition the most exciting one to date,” said Betsy Steinberg, managing director of the film office, which is part of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

Participants may use any format – film, video, graphics and/or animation – for 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 through Sept. 2, 2014. More information on the *Shortcuts* contest and the IFO can be found at www.film.illinois.gov.

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Last year's winner was Amarok Productions' *The Painter*, written and directed by Kevin Cooper and produced by Deanna Cooper. Filmed at Columbia College's Media Production Center and featuring a cast of Chicago South Side youth, *The Painter* portrays a boy who lives in a world where violence surrounds him and his sole means of survival is to escape through his art. Amarok worked with two highly-regarded Chicago organizations that help children living in high-risk neighborhoods: UCAN and Youth Guidance. Children from both organizations played roles in front and behind the camera.

Illinois' film industry saw a record-smashing \$358 million in local spending in 2013 including an all-time high six episodic television series shot in their entirety in-state. With the series *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago PD* both renewed for new seasons and pilots and films under way, 2014 is off to a fast start.

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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