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Illinois Film Office Announces “IFO Night at the Movies”

Series premiers with screening of “Wanted” in Champaign

CHICAGO – The Illinois Film Office today announced IFO Night at the Movies, a new program for citizens around the state to see movies shot in Illinois for free and to learn more about Illinois’ bustling film industry. The program kicks off in Champaign on Monday, June 30th with a screening of Universal Pictures’ Wanted starring Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman. Wanted was shot in and around Chicago in 2007, accounting for more than 800 job hires and about \$8 million in Illinois spending.

The movie will begin at 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 30 at the Savoy 16 Theatre at 232 Burwash Avenue in Savoy. Seats are limited so interested individuals should RSVP via email to secure their seats. Email responses should be sent to Julie.Morgan@illinois.gov. Wanted 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 around the state 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. “With the help of the Champaign Tourism and Convention Bureau as well as local businesses, we expect the night to be a huge success.”

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; “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 Johnnie 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. “The IFO Night At the Movies program is another way that we’re promoting Illinois’ vibrant film industry.”

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.

Gov. 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.