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## Waterfront Film Festival focuses on new ArtPrize partnership in 2015

*WFF may return to lakeshore summer event as well in 2016*

**Grand Rapids, Mich., March 12, 2015** – Waterfront Film Festival, in its continued effort to grow the regional presence of film in West Michigan, has formed a cultural partnership with ArtPrize to create a competitive film component to be called “ArtPrize OnScreen: Presented by Waterfront Film Festival”.

The film competition will coincide with the annual open art competition Sept. 23-Oct. 11 in Grand Rapids, Mich. More details as well as times and locations will be announced.

Organizers of Waterfront Film Festival had been in the process of investigating expansion possibilities when a rumor was released to the media unexpectedly cancelling the annual summer event in South Haven, June 11-14.

“We had been trying to figure out a way to host both events this year. However, once the rumor was announced cancelling the event in June, it felt like a sign. Despite our best efforts to quell rumors, the snowball effect was powerful,” co-founder Dori DePree said. “We found people were already rescheduling and making other arrangements. That continued to happen during the following days, and we realized rather than spending all of our time and energy trying to counteract rumors, it would be better to move forward and focus 100 percent on this new and exciting opportunity with ArtPrize in Grand Rapids for 2015. We hope to return with a summer lakeshore event as well in 2016. Ultimately, this twist still fits within Waterfront’s mission of having more events throughout the West Michigan region.”

Waterfront Film Festival was held during its initial 14 years in Saugatuck, Mich., and moved for the last two years to South Haven, Mich. DePree said both communities remain in the plans as a reinvention of festival activities enter Grand Rapids, and the vision for the coming years is to have multiple communities involved.

“Since the inception of the Waterfront Film Festival in 1999, we have continually made strides to raise the organization’s presence throughout the region to help build appreciation for inventive filmmaking and the middle-coast film industry,” WFF co-founder Hopwood DePree said. “We have been in conversations with ArtPrize for quite a while on this front, and we now feel we are in a good position to expand in this way.”

SAGIndie, Screen Actors Guild Magazine, ranked Waterfront among the top five film festival’s in the world. In recent years the festival has programmed more than 80 films each year – including documentaries, shorts and narrative features – as well as Q&A and industry mixers with visiting filmmakers and actors.

Programming details for ArtPrize OnScreen: Presented by Waterfront Film Festival continue to be considered.

“There is so much opportunity in this partnership, with Waterfront’s robust experience in film coupled with the inspired offerings and public enthusiasm associated with ArtPrize, we are looking forward to combining these efforts as a great opportunity for both organizations and to be extremely appealing to artists, filmmakers and the public.” Hopwood DePree said.

**About Waterfront Film Festival**

Now in its 17th year, Waterfront Film Festival celebrates independent film and filmmakers. Held in West Michigan, WFF is one of the leading destination film events in the Midwest, regularly hosting Midwest premieres of Academy Award-winning and nominated documentaries. Recognized as a top five film festival, WFF is a non-profit event committed to creating a “middle coast” venue for independent filmmakers while further enhancing the cultural draw of West Michigan. For more information on Waterfront Film Festival visit [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org), “like” us on Facebook at [facebook.com/WaterfrontFilm](https://facebook.com/WaterfrontFilm) and follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/WaterfrontFilm](https://twitter.com/WaterfrontFilm).