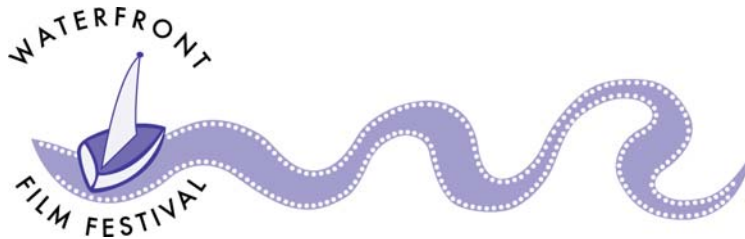


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Waterfront Film Festival Selected as West Michigan's Official Oscar Night® America Event

Gala and Fundraiser on February 22 to be Held in Conjunction with the 2009 Oscars

Grand Rapids, Michigan, November 17, 2008 – West Michigan film lovers will experience the prestige, glamour and excitement of the 81st Academy Awards® when Hollywood comes to West Michigan on Oscar Night, Sunday, February 22, 2009, for the region's only official Oscar Night® America party.

Planning for the gala event, to benefit the Waterfront Film Festival, is already underway by a committee of volunteers, and a venue will be announced soon.

The Waterfront Film Festival party is the region's only event – and one of only three in the Midwest – officially sanctioned by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. It joins 54 other events held in cities nationwide, including Detroit and Chicago, on the night of the Awards telecast. Only one nonprofit organization in each media market can be selected to host an official viewing party and fundraiser.

Attendees will be able to watch the 81st Academy Awards on a big screen and will receive official programs of the 81st Academy Awards. They will also have the opportunity to network with Waterfront Film Festival founders, filmmakers, dignitaries and Michigan-grown celebrities. Michigan, which recently passed unprecedented filmmaking incentives, is poised to become a movie-making destination.

Named one of the top five film festivals in the world, the Waterfront Film Festival hosts a four-day extravaganza the second weekend in June each year in Saugatuck. It was selected by the Academy as the first-ever Academy-sanctioned event and beneficiary in West Michigan.

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“We are delighted to host an Oscar Night America party and fundraiser,” said Dana DePree Minter, WFF co-founder and WFF-ONA co-chair. “When we got our start 11 years ago, we wanted to celebrate independent film and filmmakers by bringing truly exceptional films to West Michigan. As one of the region’s top film festival destinations, we regularly host Midwest premieres of Academy Award-winning and -nominated documentaries and independent films.

“We are planning an elegant evening for film lovers to gather together in a gracious setting for one of the high points of each year: the annual presentation of the Academy Awards. We will also be celebrating Michigan – serving Michigan wines and foods and other things that are ‘Michigan homegrown.’ We hope that West Michiganders who love movies and love Michigan will join us for this gala event.”

The West Michigan audience will watch the Academy Awards telecast on large screens via local ABC television network affiliate WZZM-TV13. ABC and the Academy are partnering with local charities for the 16th year in a row to support official Oscar Night viewing parties nationwide.

“Oscar Night America offers a taste of the Academy Awards show to communities across the country, many of which are happy not only to share in the glamour but also to support a good cause,” said Academy Executive Director Bruce Davis. “Oscar Night America enables the public to participate on a local level, where the festivities and fundraising can yield the greatest benefit.”

Official Oscar Night parties last year raised more than \$3.3 million for local charities in 51 cities. All monies raised for each event stay in the local communities.

The Academy will provide party guests in West Michigan with the same official Oscar Night program that will be distributed to guests at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland® in Hollywood, California – the location of the Academy Awards. Copies of the 81st Academy Awards commemorative poster also will be available.

“Oscar Night generates excitement all over the world,” Minter said. “With the Academy’s help, our guests will feel like they are on the A-list.”

The Waterfront Film Festival planning committee is currently seeking sponsors for the West Michigan ONA event. Interested businesses and organizations should contact Molly Klimas, event co-chair, at 616.443.4647, or klimas@intentpr.com. The organization is also seeking volunteers to assist with the event; those interested should contact Molly Klimas. Ticket information and other details will be released in the coming weeks. For more information on the Waterfront Film Festival, visit www.waterfrontfilm.org. For more information on Oscar Night America, visit www.oscars.org/ona.

About Waterfront Film Festival

Now in its 11th year, the Waterfront Film Festival celebrates independent film and filmmakers in a non-competitive environment. Located in Saugatuck, Mich., WFF is one of the leading destination film festivals in the Midwest, regularly hosting Midwest premieres of Academy Award-winning and nominated documentaries. It has been recognized as one of the top five film festivals. WFF is committed to education and features seminars designed to encourage the next generation of actors, writers and directors. For more information on the 2009 festival, which is scheduled for June 11-14, visit www.waterfrontfilm.org.

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