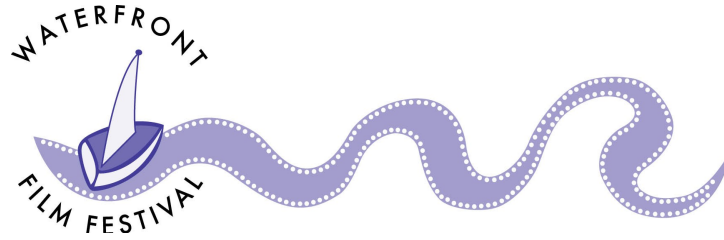


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waterfrontfilm.org
ph. 269.857.8351
fax 269.857.1072
PO Box 387
Saugatuck, MI
49453-0387



Contact: Patrick Revere
reverewriter@gmail.com
(616) 308-7573

Waterfront Film Festival recognized as premier regional destination

Saugatuck, Michigan, May 18, 2012 – During its 14-year run Waterfront Film Festival has evolved into the Midwest's top film festival, receiving national recognition as the “laid-back Sundance” and becoming a major economic driver in the state of Michigan.

In a welcome letter addressed to visitors of this year's festival, June 14-17 in Saugatuck, Mich., Gov. Rick Snyder thanked festival organizers and spoke to the importance of the annual event.

“Waterfront Film Festival embodies all that Pure Michigan has to offer by creating a rich cultural experience set amongst the natural beauty of Lake Michigan’s coastline,” Snyder stated. “It has also become an important economic driver for Saugatuck, attracting new visitors and engaging local businesses as active partners in the festival. What was once a quiet period at the start of the summer has become one of the biggest tourism weekends of the year in this community.”

An economic impact study in 2009 showed Waterfront Film Festival generates an estimated \$1.6 million for area business during the long weekend.

The screening lineup for the 14th Annual Waterfront Film Festival, now available at waterfrontfilm.org, includes 25 Midwest premieres and 22 Michigan premieres as well as a variety of official selections from the SXSW, Slamdance and Sundance film festivals. Included in the long list of amazing films are:

- The Midwest premiere of “Free Samples”, starring Jess Weixler, Jesse Eisenberg and Jason Ritter, in a twenty-somethings comedy about dessert-seeking Angelinos.
- The Michigan premiere of “Green”, a drama about two New York intellectuals who become isolated and desperate during an upstate sojourn.
- The Midwest premiere of “Buffalo Girls”, a documentary that chronicles the lives of two 8-year-old girls, both Thai prizefighters, on their emotional and heartbreaking journey to win prize-money and help provide for their families.

- The Midwest premiere of “The Orderly”, a short film about a timid orderly who is running late on his first day of work, then comes to find he must try to keep his sanity as he transports two psychiatric patients across the state.

Waterfront Film Festival has been named in Screen Actors Guild magazine by SAGIndie as one of the top five film festivals in the world, alongside Sundance and Cannes. Waterfront Film Festival has premiered a long list of award-winning films in unique venues throughout Saugatuck’s friendly and walkable resort setting. Thousands of independent film lovers, including dozens of actors, directors, writers and producers, make the annual pilgrimage to the lakeshore for the more than 70 feature films, documentaries and shorts that have been meticulously selected for screening.

The Opening Night Party with headliner Beverly McClellan of “The Voice” kicks off at 6 p.m. Thursday June 14 at Coghlin Park, near the intersection of Culver and Griffith streets in Saugatuck. Advance tickets are \$10. Other musical acts include Valentiger and Garrett Borns. Renowned artist Ron English will be on hand to sign posters.

Christopher Coppola, known to many as “Biker Chef”, will offer a culinary demonstration 2 p.m. Sunday June 17 at White House Bistro. Tickets for the fund raiser to benefit independent film projects are \$35 at waterfrontfilm.org.

For exclusive access to film and music throughout the weekend, the Patron Pass can be purchased for \$500. It provides entry to Thursday’s Opening Night Party, Special Engagement screenings, select VIP mixers and first entry for all films. Each Patron Pass also allows for a tax deduction of \$200.

The *FastPass* is \$300 and entitles the holder to first entry to all films, as well as admission to the Opening Night Party, Special Engagement screenings and exclusive entry to two VIP mixers. The Super Pass for \$200 allows the holder priority entry to all general-programmed films and admission to the Opening Night Party.

Day passes, \$70 for either Friday or Sunday, and \$75 for Saturday, also are available. Individual film tickets are on sale now at waterfrontfilm.org. Beginning Memorial Day weekend passes and tickets also will be available at the Waterfront Film Festival Summer Box Office in the Chemical Bank Building at 249 Mason Street in Saugatuck.

About Waterfront Film Festival

Now in its 14th year, 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. Recognized as a top five film festival, WFF is a volunteer-run, non-profit event committed to creating a “middle coast” venue for independent filmmakers while further enhancing the artistic draw of West Michigan. For more information on the 2012 festival, June 14-17, visit www.waterfrontfilm.org.

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