

West Michigan Film Video Alliance

Mission: *To promote a thriving film and video production community in West Michigan.*

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Celebrated Panelists Join the **Motion Picture Industry Forum: A West Michigan Perspective** An Economic and Professional Development Initiative

The **West Michigan Film Video Alliance** in partnership with **Kalamazoo Pictures** and **Southwest Michigan First** present the ***Motion Picture Industry Forum: A West Michigan Perspective*** on Thursday, March 9, 2006, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, at Brook Lodge in Augusta, Michigan. A panel of producers, directors, and editors with major production credits (see bios below) from inside and outside the state of Michigan will join motion picture professionals from West Michigan, plus regional government and business representatives, for an evening of conversation and networking.

The focus of the forum is three fold: 1) to gain insight into the process of filmmaking through open exchange with industry professionals; 2) to attract more motion picture industry projects to Michigan, and 3) to discuss how tax incentives supporting the motion picture industry in other states contribute dollars and jobs to their economy. The forum is FREE to the first 200 to register at RSVP@kalamazoopictures.com.

Participants will explore how West Michigan can begin to organize now to take advantage of the new **motion picture tax incentive package** moving through the Michigan legislature. The legislation, which includes commercial, television and film production formats, has passed the Michigan House and now rests with the Senate Tax Policy Committee, chaired by Senator Nancy Cassis.

The **Motion Picture Industry Forum** is presented in partnership with The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Goodrich Quality Theaters, Kalamazoo Film Society, and Western Michigan University's School of Communication, Department of English and Department of Theater. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Festival Playhouse: Theatre Arts at Kalamazoo College, Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and Theatre Kalamazoo are providing additional support.

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PANEL MEMBERS

Panelist **Bob Brown, Co-Founder (with Jeff Daniels) of Purple Rose Films**, represents Michigan's own industry Producer. Brown's Charity Island Pictures recently completed production on the film "Bonneville," produced with Robert May ("Fog of War," "Station Agent,") starring Jessica Lange, Kathy Bates, and Joan Allen. Brown said, "I've enjoyed making several films in Michigan. The more work on Michigan soil, the better."

Avram Ludwig, Producer/Director, will be here from New York City where he serves on the board of the Actors Studio (alongside Paul Newman, Al Pacino, etc). He has produced two films recently selected to the Cannes Film Festival and was one of the producers of the hit independent film classic "Swingers." Ludwig said, "Trained crew is vital to hosting a motion picture project. An opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with Michigan's production professionals is a critical step to future projects." In addition, Ludwig will share insights about New York City's "Made in New York" tax incentive package that created over \$600M in increased production revenues last year, building on the state's tax benefits for filmmakers.

Also from New York (born in Kalamazoo) is **Lee Percy, Editor**. Lee has edited three pictures that ultimately won acting Oscars: "Reversal of Fortune" (Jeremy Irons), "Kiss of the Spiderwoman" (William Hurt), and "Boys Don't Cry" (Hilary Swank). More recent credits include "The Believer" (Sundance Grand Jury Prize Winner), "Maria Full of Grace," and "Ice Harvest" (with Chicago native John Cusak and Billy Bob Thornton). Percy said, "My Kalamazoo experience was a solid foundation in preparing me for a career in filmmaking. I look forward to sharing my career experiences with like-minded professionals in Michigan."

Representative Bill Huizenga (Zeeland) chairs the Michigan House Commerce Committee. He recently sponsored the motion picture industry tax incentive legislation under consideration now in the state Senate. He has received wide recognition for his vision that filmmaking can make a positive economic difference for Michigan. The Representative successfully led the unanimous confirmation for tax benefits in the Michigan House.

Senator Tom George (District 20) is chair of the Senate Appropriations History, Arts & Libraries Subcommittee. One of the duties of the HAL Subcommittee is to oversee funding for the Michigan Film Office. Prior to his election to the legislature Sen. George wrote and helped produce two PBS documentaries.

SPONSORS

Kalamazoo Pictures Group provides motion picture production services, digital cinema rental, sales, staging and film exhibition. Kalamazoo Pictures Founder and Forum event producer, Ken Robinson said, "It's time to put a face on the Michigan film industry. Reaching out to and hosting seasoned industry professionals is an important step in attracting more film projects here. We are lucky to have such an esteemed panel as our guests."

Nationally recognized for innovation in economic development, **Southwest Michigan First** is the region's key economic development organization whose focus is on efforts to grow and sustain a strong regional economy through business creation, expansion and attraction, as well as job creation and retention. CEO Ron Kitchens stated, "Southwest Michigan First is excited to be on the ground floor of enhancing the motion picture industry in the region."

The mission of **West Michigan Film Video Alliance (WMFVA)** is to promote a thriving film and video production community, to attract and retain production work, and to develop and support the production community of West Michigan. WMFVA Chair Deb Havens said, "In 2005, our first full year, the West Michigan Film Video Alliance has served a membership of nearly 200. The momentum we have gathered as a region of production professionals is empowering us to play a significant role in building Michigan's economy through the motion picture industry."

The West Michigan Film Video Alliance welcomes the forum as a logical follow up to the recent economic summit ***The REEL Deal: The Economic Potential of the Film and Television Industry in West Michigan*** held in Grand Rapids last November, sponsored in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids Economic Development Office, Grand Valley State University School of Communications, The Right Place, Inc., the West Michigan Chamber Coalition, and the West Michigan Tourist Association.

Please check the West Michigan Film Video Alliance website for more details: www.wmfva.org