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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD ACTOR ERNEST BORGNINE TO HELP KICK OFF NEW WEST MICHIGAN FILM GROUP

Grand Rapids, Mich. -- The screening of a locally made film starring Oscar-winning actor Ernest Borgnine will serve as the kick-off event for the West Michigan Film & Video Alliance (WMFVA), a new non-profit group dedicated to promoting the region's burgeoning film community.

"Barn Red," a full-length feature shot on high-definition digital video by Traverse City filmmaker Richard Brauer, will be shown Thursday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. at Celebration Cinema, 2121 Celebration Ave. NE (corner of Knapp and East Beltline). Admission is \$10 for the general public and free to WMFVA members. Proceeds will help fund future events and projects of the organization. A members-only on-stage question and answer session with the filmmaker will follow the screening of "Barn Red," with a reception for Brauer and Borgnine taking place afterwards.

PRESS CONFERENCE

A press conference to introduce the West Michigan Film & Video Alliance, Richard Brauer, and Ernest Borgnine takes place Thursday, Jan. 20, 6:30 PM at Celebration Cinema, 2121 Celebration Ave. NE. Contact: (616) 901-6804 / Paul E. La Vigne, Marketing & PR Director for more information, or visit: www.wmfva.org/kickoff.php.

"Barn Red" tells the tale of Michael Bolini (Borgnine), a cherry farmer hounded by real estate developers who want to subdivide his land. It's the third feature film Brauer, head of a full-service film, video and multimedia production company with clients like Domino's Pizza, Pixar, and Subway, has made in West Michigan in 12 years. All the movies, including "Escanaba in Da Moonlight," and "Super Sucker" starring Chelsea, Michigan resident Jeff Daniels, had budgets of less than \$1 million, Brauer said.

www.wmfva.org

2005 GOALS

Attract and retain production work in West Michigan

Develop and support the production community

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"Professionals like Mr. Brauer stay in West Michigan rather than heading east or west because they like the combination of small town living and high-tech production facilities," said Deb Havens, WMFVA Executive Director.

"They realize that doing business in West Michigan isn't LIKE a day at the beach, it IS a day at the beach...or a covered bridge, rural landscape or handsome cityscape. We have it all right here," Havens said. "Filmmaking can generate millions of dollars in a community if a major production company uses it as a location. We also want to promote smaller projects that showcase Michigan talent and contribute to local economies through film budgets spent in restaurants, hotels and for other services," she added.

The WMFVA intends to provide membership benefits to the nearly 5,500 entertainment industry professionals in West Michigan such as producers, directors, choreographers, art directors, composers, computer graphics and animation experts, writers, agents, and actors and other film/video support personnel. Those benefits include lobbying for tax incentives to filmmakers, providing a resource directory, creating a support network and job opportunities, presenting professional workshops* and celebrity events, and offering special rates to members for equipment packages and workshop attendance. Regular screenings of Michigan-made films are also planned.

The organization has already played a key role in the development of a West Michigan Film Commission headed by Rick Hert, Executive Director of the West Michigan Tourist Association. Hert is a member of the WMFVA leadership team.

The event is sponsored by [Digital Video Services](#) (Grand Rapids), [Celebration Cinema](#) (Grand Rapids), [Fletcher Chicago](#) (Chicago), and [BlueWater Technologies](#) (Southfield). For more information about joining the West Michigan Film & Video Alliance, visit www.wmfva.org. Annual membership is \$40. For details about the screening of "Barn Red," call (616) 901-6804 / Paul E. La Vigne.

*Scheduled 2005 Workshops

Saturday, March 19th - "HD & New Digital Technologies"

Saturday, April 30th - "Acting for the Camera"

Saturday, August 27th - "The Role of Producer & The Business of Independent Filmmaking"

Saturday, October 15th - "The Art and Craft of Screenwriting"

EVENT SPONSORS:

