Ashland Independent Film Festival

The Ashland Independent Film Festival (AIFF) is a five-day film festival showing a broad range of non-studio films. The festival typically offers more than eighty works and, though international in scope, features its Oregon connections with filmmakers such as Klamath Falls native Chris Eyre ("Smoke Signals," 1998) and Jacksonville resident Bruce Campbell ("My Name is Bruce," 2007). The audience is predominantly local (80 percent of those attending coming from within a 50-mile radius) but has drawn some well known filmmakers to Ashland to present their films.

The festival offers several general and audience awards, including the Gerald Hirschfeld A.S.C. Award for cinematography (in honor of the Ashland resident whose works include *Fail-Safe* and *Young Frankenstein)*, the Rogue Award, and The Launch, the festival's Southern Oregon student competition. Judges review entries in categories of narrative, documentary, experimental, animation, and student-produced films.

The first festival opened in October 2001 at the Varsity Theatre, drawing on Ashland's tourist-friendly reputation and local interest in film. The annual event has since expanded to the Historic Ashland Armory, and ticket sales reached 16,000 in 2008. Grants from the Carpenter and Collins Foundations funded a new screen and digital projector for the armory.

The Festival operates with a staff of four and approximately 300 volunteers and has an annual economic impact estimated at $2.8 million on the Ashland economy. AIFF has received grant funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

The AIFF also provides an opportunity to showcase films from and about Oregon; the festival has presented such films as "The Storytellers," a look at the lives of six actors at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; "Crater Lake: Mirror of Heaven"; "Clear Cut: The Story of Philomath, Oregon"; "The Roseburg Blast"; and "Legends from Camp," an animated adaptation of Poet Laureate Lawson Inada's poetry.

Written by Edwin Battistella

Further Reading:

"Awards ceremony tops off festivities," *Ashland Daily Tiding*, April 6, 2008.

"Film festival gets $20,000 grant," *Medford Mail Tribune*, December 26, 2007.

Ashland Independent Film Festival http://www.ashlandfilm.org/Index.asp

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