

# PRODUCE IOWA

## STATE OFFICE OF MEDIA PRODUCTION



### Greetings,

I think most people are glad to reach "The End" of 2020 and fast-forward into 2021. But even in a pandemic, Iowa's film community has achieved some amazing things that I'd like to share with you. So let's . . .

### ◀◀ Rewind



*"The Film Lounge" watch party at the Fleur Cinema & Cafe in Des Moines.*

We started the year with the fourth season of ["The Film Lounge,"](#) the television series that features independent short films produced by Iowa filmmakers. It's produced by Iowa PBS in partnership with the Iowa Arts Council and our office here at Produce Iowa. We thank FilmScene in Iowa City and the Fleur Cinema & Café in Des Moines for hosting the cast and crew, who had a chance to see their work on the big screen and network with other filmmakers along with friends, family and the general public. It's always fun to see the stories our industry's creative minds dream up and to showcase those stories across the state.

We partnered with Sukup Manufacturing, Successful Farming magazine and Iowa Corn for a special screening of ["Silo"](#) at the Iowa Power Farming Show

at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines. The feature film tells a powerful story about grain entrapment and addresses critical issues of farm safety. The dramatic narrative was partially filmed in 2018 in northern Iowa by New York City filmmaker Samuel Goldberg, who returned to Iowa for the screening and to help us promote more rural storytelling.



*Pictured: Sen. William Dotzler of Waterloo, center, gives the "Silo" crew a tour of the senate chambers at the State Capitol.*

## MediaMasters



In February we launched the first webinar in our popular [MediaMasters Series](#) to provide professional development to Iowans. Little did we know how timely that move turned out to be: Back then, we tried Zoom just as an experiment to connect with people who didn't want to brave the snowy roads.

"Pivot" became the new theme during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that's what we did for a virtual workshop and watch party for ["The Film Lounge: Student Challenge."](#) We sent swag bags to participants and gathered around our home screens, through Zoom and OVEE, to talk with professional Iowa filmmakers, watch short films and conduct a student filmmaker Q&A with the general public. It was a great way to engage people across the state and beyond who might not otherwise have attended in person at the Iowa PBS studios in Johnston. Our thanks go to the Iowa students in grades 7-12 who submitted their short films, and we're excited to see where their careers take them.



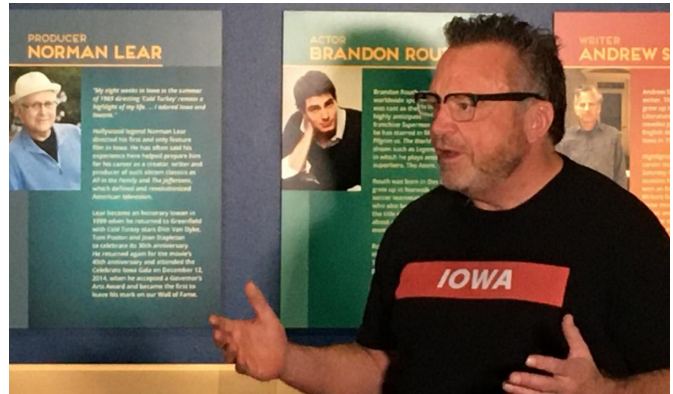
Zooming continued throughout the year with various task forces, summits, grant discussions, community drop-ins, film festivals and [MediaMaker profiles](#). Thank goodness for the internet to keep us all connected.



*Pictured: Cedar Rapids MediaMaker Paul Huenemann with Liz Gilman.*

Speaking of connecting, a Los Angeles producer contacted our office in April to see if Iowa was open for business. With the help of our [Media Production Directory](#), he hired Iowa crew to film in and around Winterset and Des Moines; the producer worked remotely with the on-site director and creative team. When I checked with the producer later, he said: "I had the best experience with our crew in Iowa led by Carol Baty – nothing but the best things to say about them and the work they provided us." Check out the results of their excellent work in this [national commercial for Bank of America](#), narrated by actress Viola Davis.

Produce Iowa safely hosted actor/comedian Tom Arnold at the "[Hollywood in the Heartland](#)" exhibition in the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Tom helped us launch the exhibition in 2014, but we didn't create our Wall of Fame until later that year. So he added his handprints and literally cemented his place in Iowa history, and we appreciate his tireless efforts to promote our state.



*Tom Arnold visits the "Hollywood in the Heartland" exhibition.*



The [Greenlight Grants](#) continue to mark a major milestone for our office as we support local projects produced in Iowa by Iowans. This year's grants, ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000, were awarded to **Justin Norman** of Des Moines for the pilot production of his comedy digital series "TubeLords," to **Graham Swon** of Fairfield for the narrative drama "An Evening Song" that he was inspired to write after moving to Iowa from New York City, and to **Charles G. Brewton Jr.** of Des Moines for his documentary "JustUs" about formerly incarcerated African American men.

We look forward to seeing their work evolve from script to screen and hope it inspires more local collaborations and creates more sustainable jobs. We thank our lawmakers for believing in Iowa filmmakers who are building this industry from the ground up.

## ►► 2021

As you can see, we're strategically building support for a homegrown industry to meet the world's growing demands for content. Entertainment is what got us through this pandemic so far, and I have high hopes next year for watching more authentic Iowa stories like the Greenlight Grant digital series "[Complete Bull,](#)" celebrating the fifth season of the "[The Film Lounge](#)" (and the successful state partnership that has made it happen), and cheering on the Major League Baseball game between the New York Yankees and Chicago White Sox at the famous "[Field of Dreams.](#)"

So start popping the popcorn and, as always, thank you for your support.



Liz Gilman

Executive Producer, Produce Iowa – State Office of Media Production

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