

## Season's Greetings,

It's that time of year again. I don't know about you, but I think one of the biggest results of this ongoing pandemic is that time seems compressed and it's harder to measure if things were a day, week or months ago! So let's take a moment to pause, rewind and celebrate our accomplishments in 2021.



## ◀◀ Rewind

Last January, Iowans didn't have to travel to Utah for the Sundance Film Festival because the famous festival came to us. The festival chose [FilmScene](#) in Iowa City as one of its exclusive Sundance Satellite Screen locations, which our office was proud to sponsor.



On Jan. 27, we joined the [State Historical Society of Iowa](#) to celebrate Donnabelle Mullenger's birth in Denison, Iowa, exactly 100 years earlier. Today, the world knows her as Donna Reed. Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaimed it "Donna Reed Day" while Turner Classic Movies host Alicia Malone gave a special greeting to kick off the [centennial](#). The Academy Award winner and famous television mother died in 1986, but her legacy lives on through the [Donna Reed Foundation for the Performing Arts](#), which operates a performing arts center and museum in her hometown. Be sure to stop by and see her Oscar the next time you're in Denison.

The fifth season of "[The Film Lounge](#)" aired for a statewide audience on Iowa PBS. We're grateful for this important partnership, along with the [Iowa Arts Council](#), and are proud to help elevate all the talented filmmakers who contributed their short stories this year. If you didn't catch the two 1-hour episodes on TV, you can always [screen them online](#).

Produce Iowa was able to offer more professional development classes for Iowa filmmakers through our [MediaMasters Series](#). From editing to color-correcting to musical scoring to networking, EJ Philby and I hope you've learned from these virtual workshops.

I know I learned a lot from the workshop about budgeting for documentaries.



Did you catch a screening of our [Executive Directors' Film Festival Picks](#)? Our office produced the new 1-hour program last spring to showcase some of the great programming at Iowa's 16 annual film festivals. Executive directors from each festival submitted their favorite short film of 2020, which we curated into a five-film statewide showcase. Stay tuned for the best of 2021, which will be released and available for free for private screenings early next year. As always, we thank all the communities and volunteers who believe in the value of film for building cultural experiences and local economies across Iowa.

We appreciate the federal and state grants that became available to Iowans in our industry, and we thank our colleagues at the [Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs](#) who kept busy with this important work. Keep an eye out for future opportunities through the department's new role as the interim state [humanities](#) partner with National Endowment for the Humanities. We look forward to strengthening our culture by sharing even more stories through film and media across the state.



We're thankful for Iowa's [higher education institutions](#) that offer a media production program. Through summits (pictured above) and classroom visits, we continue to share best practices and help connect students to working sets in our state.

We are proud of our most recent round of [Greenlight Grant](#) recipients – Brendan Dunphy of Ames, Rebecca Haroldson of Urbandale, Tyler Hill and Kevin Kelly of Iowa City, and Hannah Rosalie Wright of Des Moines –

and we look forward to the stories they'll tell on the big screen. Over the last three years, we've granted nearly \$500,000 to empower Iowa filmmakers and grow the film and television industry in our state.



This past summer our state received some priceless promotion when the world tuned in to watch a Major League Baseball game at the Field of Dreams Movie Site. We already knew Iowa is heaven to filmmakers, but baseball players and fans feel the same way, too, according to actor [Kevin Costner's moving pre-game speech](#) to the crowd. It was THE sporting event of the year, and to think that it all started with a story that hatched in Iowa City and became a book and then a script and then an iconic movie. The rest is history – and our future.

Cross your fingers for an Iowa film directed by Buffalo Center native Jerry Risius and New York-based producer Beth Levison. "Storm Lake" tells the story of a small-town newspaper, The Storm Lake Times, and the family who keeps it running. Since winning the Audience Award at AFI-DOCS in Washington, D.C., the film embarked on an impressive tour across Iowa and much farther afield. PBS's ["Independent Lens"](#) premiered it to television audiences nationwide and the [International Documentary Association](#) has named it to its short list of films to be considered for Oscar nomination. Stay tuned!

(Pictured left to right: Newspaper editor Art Cullen with Beth Levison and Jerry Risius.)



While Produce Iowa kept busy supporting Iowans this year, we also helped facilitate production requests from programmers such as HBO, HGTV, Fox, History Channel, Discovery and others. We also reached out by sponsoring industry events with the PGA and DGA in Hollywood and by moderating a panel discussion as part of Gotham Week, presented by The Gotham Film & Media Institute in New York.

## ▶▶ 2022

Finally, please raise a glass to toast [Iowa's 175th anniversary](#) of statehood on Dec. 28. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you next year. We're honored to be a part of this great state and salute the [people and success stories](#) that have made it to the screen before us.



Iowa is home to genuine hospitality, talented production crews, beautiful locations and an authentic filmmaking experience. Our state is ready for your story in 2022.

Cheers!

Liz Gilman

Executive Producer, Produce Iowa – State Office of Media Production

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter

Send us a tip

[Produce Iowa](#) | [Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs](#) | 515-281-5111 | [iowaculture.gov/media](#)

STAY CONNECTED

