



ANNUAL REPORT
DURANGO FILM INSTITUTE/DURANGO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL
FY 2005-2006

***M*ISSION:** to bring challenging, entertaining, and diverse independent film to our Four Corners community, provide a competitive film festival for an enthusiastic and receptive audience, and include a public schools program that integrates state education standards and teaches media literacy.

***C*HALLENGE:** to present a film festival in seven months - March 1-5, 2006.

The Board of Directors composed of DIFF staff began recruiting community leaders to join the Board of Directors after incorporation in August 2005. (See [Attachment 1](#) for more information about the DIFF Board of Directors.) A local foundation, The Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado, agreed to act as DIFF's fiscal sponsor, making it possible for us to receive tax deductible donations.

The Board finalized its budget, and fundraising formally began in October 2005. As the months progressed, DIFF secured \$14,093 in donations, \$9,915 in grants, \$28,500 in sponsorships, and \$79,430 in in-kind support from the local business community. In-kind donations consisted of goods and services such as theater rental fees, radio and newspaper advertising, the official festival beer, art design, computer equipment, website development and wireless access to the internet, festival signage, printing, car rental, ski tickets, and food and beverages for festival events.

GOALS: We are pleased to say we met our key goals for our inaugural year to offer an artistically and culturally successful 5-day festival of independent film, pay all our bills, and have reserve funds to carry over.

SPECIFIC 2006 FESTIVAL GOALS

- ✚ Fill 4,000 audience seats
ACHIEVED: 3,833 in audience seats;
DIFF seated 713 students in the Public Schools Program.
- ✚ Have 35 filmmakers in attendance
CLOSE -- 28 of 60 films were represented.
DIFF hosted 44 out of town filmmakers, jurors, and guests:
- ✚ Host film festival public school programs for Durango and Ignacio School Districts
ACHIEVED – School programs were held in Durango at the Gaslight Theatre, at Durango High School, and in Ignacio.
(See [Attachment 4](#) for description of Public Schools Program.)
- ✚ Raise \$30,000 in funds from grants
NOT ACHIEVED – DIFF received \$9,915 in grants
DIFF was hampered by the short window in which to write grants, and the fact that 2005-2006 was its initial year of operation.
- ✚ Conduct a filmmaker survey of attending filmmakers
ACHIEVED – 16 Survey Responses.
- ✚ Conduct a sponsor survey
ACHIEVED – 13 Survey Responses.
- ✚ Conduct a study of the economic impact of the festival
ACHIEVED - a study was conducted by students from the FLC business department. It found that expenditures by DIFF in La Plata County totaled \$47,877, with filmmakers spending \$20,763 during the festival. Total estimated economic impact was \$303,286¹.

According to the Colorado Council on the Arts, tourists who travel for cultural reasons stay 50% longer and spend 36% more than other travelers.

¹ Film audience spending estimates are somewhat flawed, as survey results were multiplied by number of seats filled. In 2007 we plan to improve the economic survey results by using an accurate estimate of number of individuals attending the festival, thereby improving the accuracy of the total estimated economic impact of the festival.

FILMS: Seventy-one diverse, independent films were screened during the 2006 festival, of which eighteen films were made outside the USA. One short film was nominated for the Academy Award in its category. Documentary subjects included the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East, the effects of war on victims and combatants and their families, polygamy, immigration, the future of manned space travel, subsistence whaling in the Arctic, the culture of Tibet, and a Christian website's answer to pornography. Five films were by local filmmakers or covered local issues. Short animated films were produced by computer and by hand. Several filmmakers experimented with narrative and technique. Films celebrated the joys and obstacles in the pursuit of life, delved into philosophical questions, introduced the work of an artist, or brought a laugh based on our common humanity.

SURVEY AND ANECDOTAL RESPONSES: The Economic Impact Survey revealed that 49% of respondents heard about the festival through word of mouth, with the other respondents hearing by newspaper, radio/TV, or flyer. Sixty-one percent had attended a film festival in Durango before. The range of ages attending were from 18 to 61+, with the most common age categories 18 – 34 and 50 and older.

Ninety percent of sponsor and volunteer survey respondents said that the festival was very good or excellent. Eighty-seven percent of filmmaker survey respondents felt the festival was either better than most or their best overall festival experience. All of the responding filmmakers said they would recommend the festival to other filmmakers.

Regarding DIFF's mission to improve film literacy in our community, filmmakers said:

"It's amazing how ... a sense of community is created by first sharing your film ... and then being able to talk with [the audience] about it I was able to really delve deeper into the film which was ... hopefully enlightening for them."

"[I had a] wonderful time screening and taking questions from children."

"The festival has cultivated an entire community of independent film connoisseurs ... it was a pleasure meeting and talking with people ... [and] I came home with a renewed excitement about independent films."

Public Schools Program Coordinator, Melissa Vance:

Overwhelmingly, teacher[s] loved the programs. Several of the principals took time ... to chat with me and complemented the program ... they appreciate the opportunity for their students to experience great quality, thought provoking, creative, and unique film selections that are so different from what the kids watch on TV and rent ... [and] appreciate the supporting media literacy materials [which are donated by DIFF]. The 9-R Curriculum Directors completely support the school programs and see how they benefit the district.

SERVING FILMGOERS OF LIMITED MEANS:

In an effort to make film programs accessible, DIFF instituted Free Movie Night, which seated 478 people on opening night. Students bought 180 tickets at a savings of \$3 per ticket. Our 2 for \$10 coupons were employed by 146 filmgoers, giving a \$6.00 savings on two morning program tickets. Public Schools Program films were free to the students.

OTHER PROGRAMS: The vision for our nonprofit organization expanded during our post-festival retreat, and the Board of Directors approved amendment of the name to “Durango Film Institute, d/b/a The Durango Independent Film Festival” to more fully reflect our updated mission statement and our new activities as a year-round film organization. (See [Attachment 2](#) for Updated Mission Statement and Guiding Principles.)

1. Collaborations with Nonprofits: DIFF partnered with Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, the Four Corners Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Diversity, The San Juan Basin Health Department, and the Women’s Resource Center to organize the screening of the documentary *The Education of Shelby Knox* with a panel discussion following.
2. Membership Program: DIFF had 35 members at the end of the fiscal year.
3. Monthly Movie Series: An average of 99 people attended each Monthly Movie during the fiscal year. The series showed its first film in April 2006.

DIFF is seeking its own status as a public charity, or 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and hopes to receive its confirmation from the IRS in 2007, at which time the Community Foundation and DIFF will dissolve their relationship. (See [Attachment 3](#) for financial philosophy.)

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE PLANS: DIFF is already planning for the addition of an audience survey, and student and teacher surveys from the Public Schools Program.

Improvements to the sponsor, volunteer and filmmaker survey questions will make it possible to support the economic impact study and capture information which the organization can use to improve evaluation of outcomes and locate and solve problems.

The budget for FY 2006-2007 has just about tripled due to planning for increased administrative and program costs. To increase stability and organization sustainability, we picked out critical positions to pay this year pending the availability of funding:

- ✚ Full Time Executive Director
- ✚ Administrative Assistant to begin in November, 2006
- ✚ Public Schools Program Coordinator

Other planned expenditures:

- ✚ Dedicate a technical team to the Public School Program.

- ✚ Add another screen for the weekend due to sellouts Friday evening and throughout the weekend. This meant DIFF lost an opportunity for more people to see films.
- ✚ Add Panels and Workshops to the 2007 film festival.
- ✚ Bring more filmmakers to the event. The interchange between the filmmakers and the audience is a key element of DFI's mission to create a community screening event. Audience members can interact with the filmmakers through Q&A at screenings and in panels and workshops. These are benefits only a film organization can bring to Four Corners audiences.
- ✚ Seek national sponsors for the 2007 festival in order to gain more visibility for DIFF and for Durango.

ATTACHMENT 1: BOARD OF DIRECTORS FY 2005-2006

Name and Occupation	Qualifications
Scott Stewart, Chair Director of Air Service, Telluride/Montrose Regional Air Organization	B.A. and post graduate work in Radio/Television and Film from the University of Arizona and Wesleyan University; Manager for the Gallagher Theater at the University of Arizona; documentary filmmaker; and published film interview articles with notable British film directors Stephen Frears and Lindsay Anderson.
Michele Malach, Vice Chair Associate Professor of English/Communication and Gender/Womens Studies at Ft. Lewis College.	Michele teaches and researches in the areas of media theory, history, gender, sexuality, fandom, and representations in popular culture. She is a board member and faculty advisor to KDUR, college community radio.
Robb Brantley, Treasurer Controller of the Best Western Rio Grande Inn.	B.A. in Communication from Auburn University.
Carla Finlay, Secretary Paralegal.	B.A. in the Humanities from Ft. Lewis College. Carla was one of the founders of Durango Natural Foods in Durango.

<p>Julie Cooley Vice President of the Mortgage Department at First National Bank of Durango.</p>	<p>Julie has served on a variety of nonprofit boards ranging from United Way of SW Colorado to The Durango Arts Center and Oakhaven Perma Culture Center. Currently she serves as chair of the V.A.L.E. board.</p>
<p>Chuck Fredrick Partner in FredrickZinkElliot, an accounting firm.</p>	<p>A graduate of Ft. Lewis College in Business and Accounting, Chuck has been a practicing CPA since 1978. He has served as President of the Colorado Society of CPAs, and has chaired the City of Durango Financial Advisory and the Budget Review Committee. He has worked with many community organizations, including Durango Youth Soccer, the Volunteers of America Southwest Safehouse and the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado. He was a board member of the former Durango Film Festival.</p>
<p>Barry Spear Attorney</p>	<p>Barry has served various non-profit organizations in the area, including the Durango Arts Center, the Durango Adult Education Center, Southwest United Way, and Music in the Mountains as a board member and pro-bono legal advisor. He also has served as president of the Southwest Colorado Bar Association and has been the chairman of its Donations Committee for seven years.</p>
<p>Greg Weiss Manager for Zircon Container Company.</p>	<p>Board Chair for Four Corners Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Diversity. He graduated with a degree in Economics from Duke University. He directed Filmmaker Management and Hospitality for the former Durango Film Festival, and has been on the staff of the Telluride Film Festival for 3 years.</p>
<p>Wally White La Plata County Commissioner. Owner/Operator of Columbine Llamas.</p>	<p>B.A. in Finance from CSU and a graduate degree in International Trade from Thunderbird, The American Institute of International Management. He has served on many area boards. Wally has been a real estate salesman, served on the County Planning Commission, Predator Control Committee, and has worked for the City of Durango and School District 9-R.</p>
<p>Debbie Wright Recently retired from Delta Airlines.</p>	<p>B.S. Degree in Sociology from West Virginia Wesleyan College. In her 30 years with Delta, Debbie was responsible for corporate sales, marketing, special events and customer service. She is a world traveler, and has been active in Durango Friends of the Arts.</p>

ATTACHMENT 2: MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



THE DURANGO FILM INSTITUTE IS COMMITTED TO FILM LITERACY AND BEING A WELCOMING, INTIMATE, AND UNIQUE FILM ORGANIZATION THAT SCREENS GLOBAL, INNOVATIVE, AND DIVERSE FILMS WHICH CONNECT INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS, THEIR ARTISTIC PROCESS, AND THEIR VISION TO THE COMMUNITY.

Guiding Principles:

- 1) The Durango Independent Film Festival is Durango's "Community Festival," and shall reflect the Durango community.
- 2) The Mission Statement and Guiding Principles shall serve as the blueprint for the Durango Film Institute, which will only change significantly if the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers decide together to alter the character of the organization.
- 3) We will be a financially sustainable organization.
- 4) We will strive to bring significant artistic, cultural and financial rewards to our community through our festival and other programs.
- 5) We will actively acknowledge the support and contributions of our sponsors and supporters.
- 6) We will strive to have large audiences for the screening filmmakers, as well as education panels and workshops, and opportunities to have contact with other industry related film professionals.
- 7) We will continuously develop our public school and education program for the benefit of local and regional children.
- 8) We will provide a forum for the independent filmmaker, screening films that may be provocative, illuminating, educational, political and entertaining in nature, but that will also provide diverse points of view.
- 9) When choosing new members for the board of directors, we will keep a balance of the following professions/skill sets: financial or accounting, legal, fundraising, one city and/or one county government representative, one filmmaker, and two seats from the festival's managing staff, present or past. Other professions/skills of interest are marketing, media, and hospitality/tourism. We will strive to have the board reflect the community.

ATTACHMENT 3: FINANCIAL PHILOSOPHY

The Durango Film Institute (DFI) endeavors to become financially sustainable. We budget to spend only funds raised in a single fiscal year, not spending carryover funds from prior years. At the end of our first fiscal year, the board of directors designated \$500 in carryover funds to a capital fund and \$500 to an endowment fund. At the end of each succeeding fiscal year, the Board intends to fund these accounts, and eventually create an emergency reserve fund. Funding these special accounts over time will enable DFI to develop a large enough endowment to meet a significant portion of our future budgets. Starting our capital fund now is intended with the same long term goal of having a good start on funds for future growth.

We're pleased with our start as a nonprofit organization. We are proud to say that in our first year we not only covered our expenses but came out of the film festival with funds which can be used for future development. The Board of Directors revised the expense budget several times during the seven months to get to this result - \$55,000 was the final budget for the film festival.

We know that the long-term sustainability of our organization cannot continue with an all-volunteer staff, and we are looking at a very large yearly budget increase to \$135,296 for all Durango Film Institute programs. We have recently hired an Executive Director and have plans to pay for other positions, and expand the number of venues and technical support as funding becomes available. However, in the event we fall short of fundraising targets for the 2007 festival, we have specific benchmarks to guide us in adjusting program and event expenditures to insure we fall within the budget for the year. We are, of course, working hard to acquire the funding we've targeted because budget cuts will mean program cuts, which would inhibit our event and mission and our positive impact on the Durango community. We are a new organization, but our goal is to attain financial sustainability for many years to come.

ATTACHMENT 4: PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROGRAM



Film is a venue that inspires students to develop into critical, creative, and flexible thinkers. Film also assists students to develop cultural appreciation.

Working closely with schools, the DIFF is offering film as a creative and flexible learning tool that is integrated into State Standards to help meet learning goals for our community's students.

The Durango Independent Film Festival will sponsor and host film festival programs for both Durango School District 9-R and Ignacio School District. Primary, intermediate, and secondary educators with strong film backgrounds will be on the school programs' film selection committee. These film festival programs will present to approximately 900 elementary, middle school, and high school students in both of the school districts.

The educational film festival programs integrate the Colorado Department of Education State Standards for student learning including several of the Visual Arts, Literacy, and Theatre Standards. Independent film for student audiences additionally addresses many of the History, Civic, Economic, and Geography Standards. Information and media literacy is threaded throughout several of these state standards.

It is the Durango Independent Film Festival's desire to promote media information literacy in the school film festival programs including providing highly creative films of new ideas and unique viewpoints that are thought provoking and lend to engaging and intriguing discussions for school students. The film selections also lead students to evolve into healthy skeptical viewers, versus sponges or cynics as described in the media information literacy components of the Colorado State Standards.

We will supply the participating schools with information media literacy packets that contain activities to present to students before, during, and after screening the films. Additionally we will purchase media literacy activity books or teaching media literacy films for the schools. During each of our school programs students will be provided time to consult with film directors of some of the films we screen.