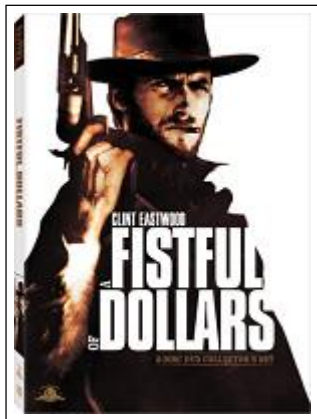


Schabow: Preserve Wisconsin's Film Tax Credit

[View](#)

[What links here](#)

Submitted by [Schabow](#) on Thu, 2009-03-12 14:36 [Current](#) | [Advocacy](#) | [Film](#) | [WisFilmFest2009](#)



This story represents the opinion of the author and is neither an official opinion from Dane101 nor is it necessarily representative of the opinions of other Dane101 contributors.

Back in 2004, when I was a movie critic for *The Wisconsinite*, one of my first assignments was partnering up with a veteran filmmaker to cover the [Wisconsin Film Festival](#). This other film critic was older and smarter about movies than I was and took me under his wing. During that weekend he discussed how the other prominent film festivals are nice but that, logistically, Madison is a much better place for these types of events.

After thinking about it, that made sense to me. After all, the scenery here is spectacular, there are quaint coffee shops and tasty restaurants to hang out in between movies, and most importantly, almost all of the theaters are within walking distance during a time the weather is nice and springy out. That conversation, and the walk outside to the next movie, sparked a vision. Not only could Madison compete with the bigger film festivals (Cannes, Sundance, New York Film Festival) because of its great location, but it also could be a great place to make movies.

Madison could be a Midwest Mecca for both filmmakers and film lovers; a marriage between filming all kinds of movies here and screening those same films at our own festival; an opportunity for local up-and-comers as well as the famous/acclaimed seasoned professionals to screen and discuss their movies they filmed right here in Wisconsin.

From the festival side, organizer Meg Hamel has done an amazing job of getting some great talent here for the WFF. Each year she outdoes herself. If there is a person to make this happen, it's her at the helm of this ship.

However, it wasn't until the Wisconsin tax credit for filmmakers was put into law last year that I really saw this dream becoming a reality. Suddenly we had Johnny "One Pirate Movie Too Many" Depp and Christian "Calm the Fuck Down" Bale filming on our own capitol steps. There is no doubt about it, *Public Enemies* brought in some Hollywood stars and Madison loved it--and Hollywood loved Madison back. Hopefully, years down the line, this exposure could benefit the WFF by helping to attain some "hard to get" movie talent. I mean, who wouldn't want to come back to Madison?

Well, Governor Doyle's new budget proposal may put a wrench in all of that. He suggested eliminating the film tax incentives entirely. Apparently, the numbers seem to suggest the state of Wisconsin lost money due to *Public Enemies*. Considering the state of our economy, Doyle's reaction is fair, but also a bit of a knee-jerk reaction. After all, the numbers didn't suggest what revenues could come in the future. There could be tourist attractions that come out of filmmaking as well as the revenue of a nationally known film festival. I doubt Park City, Utah loses money with the Sundance Film Festival each year.

Thanks to the unbelievable commitment and organization of Hamel, the WFF has the opportunity to compete with the big festivals. I really do believe that. They just need a bit more support from Wisconsin lawmakers to help them out.