



FORT SMITH
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

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Cultural Relations Grow Between Fort Smith and Sister City, Cisterna

Fort Smith International Film Festival & Cisterna Film Festival Work Together to Build Artistic and Business Relationship

CONTACT: Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith; *Executive Director*, Fort Smith International Film Festival (FSIFF)

PHONE/EMAIL: 858.405.3278 / fwrbrandon@hotmail.com

CONTACT: Jennifer Burchett; *Artistic Director*, Fort Smith International Film Festival (FSIFF)

PHONE/EMAIL: 806.939.3049 / info@fortsmithfilm.com / www.fortsmithfilm.com

CONTACT: Eleonora Materazzo; *Communications Director*, Cisterna Film Festival

EMAIL: eleonora.materazzo@gmail.com

CONTACT: Sandy Sanders; *Previous Mayor*, City of Fort Smith

PHONE/EMAIL: 479.651.1786 / Sandysandersark@gmail.com

FORT SMITH, AR: Fort Smith and Cisterna, Italy have begun communication to strengthen the bond between the sister cities. Bringing the two entities together was in large part due to the sister city's respective film festivals; the Fort Smith International Film Festival and the Cisterna Film Festival. The re-invigoration of the decades old partnership began when Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Fort Smith International Film Festival, realized that Cisterna also had a film festival coming up.

Previous Fort Smith Mayor Sandy Sanders said the historic relationship is one that he and Gianni Salis (previous Cisterna Mayor) had been trying to reinvigorate for years. That's when Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith reached out to Mr. Sanders to begin the dialogue. "Brandon gave me a holler, I then got ahold of Gianni, and it all got going from there," shares Mr. Sanders. "This is a wonderful opportunity to once again work closely with the people of Cisterna on an ongoing basis to exchange art, culture, and business."

Members from the Fort Smith International Film Festival and the Cisterna Film Festival hope to develop the partnership for the economic and cultural development of both cities and their citizens.

Marianna Cozzuto, Executive Director of the Cisterna Film Festival, had this to say; "For an International Short Film Festival such as the Cisterna Film Festival, it is fundamental to establish partnerships and build new friendships, especially during these unprecedented times. This twinning, which was intended as a bridge for cultural exchanges between the two towns, will be strengthened by the art and energies that these two festivals will exchange and spread. The meeting with Brandon Chase Goldsmith was really exciting and rich in projects for the future. This is only the beginning of our partnership that will grow thanks to cinematographic as well as theatrical activities by Mobilitazioni Artistiche."

Members of the Fort Smith International Film Festival hope to support their Cisterna counterparts by traveling to Italy for the Cisterna Film Festival, set to take place throughout July in Cisterna and Cori, Italy. Dr. Goldsmith and Jennifer Burchett, Artistic Director for the Fort Smith International Film Festival, will be judges for the Cisterna Film Festival, and directors from the Cisterna Film Festival will do the same for the Fort Smith festival. Winning films from the Cisterna Film Festival will be shown at the Fort Smith International Film Festival.

"A goal of our area's first ever film festival is to bring the world to the river valley, and to show off our region's talent, which I see as extending across the oceans to our Italian twin. A way to rekindle the cultural bonds tying our cities and people together, is to see life through each other perspectives, and what better way to do that than through film. Partnering with the executive director of the Cisterna Film Festival, Marianna Cozzuto and her team will not only be an exciting experience, but it will also give us an opportunity to build on the relationships put in place through the twinning of our cities in 1984," shared Dr. Goldsmith.

The Fort Smith International Film Festival invites Italian filmmakers to submit their films for free to the inaugural festival set to take place on August 13-14, 2021 in downtown Fort Smith with the promo code "Gemellaggio", which means 'twinning' in Italian. As the classic movie line goes, "...this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."