

MEDIA RELEASE

Jan. 20, 2022

FORT SMITH, Ark. – Starting Feb. 4, filmmakers from around the world are invited to submit their works to be screened at the second annual Fort Smith International Film Festival, Aug. 26-27.

“Borderlands” has been chosen as the theme of this year’s festival, which is supported once again by Arvest as presenting sponsor with a \$10,000 donation. Films chosen by the festival screening committee will compete for cash prizes, trophies, and scholarships.

TempleLive, a historic downtown Fort Smith venue, will serve as the anchor location for the 2022 festival. Built in 1929, the masonic temple houses several rooms with original art deco fixtures and Egyptian themed murals, which will serve as the backdrop for screening rooms and filmmaker workshops. Harkening back to the venue’s past as a theater, TempleLive will provide an all-in-one movie going experience for festival goers and filmmakers.

“Why Borderlands as the theme? Fort Smith is an original wild west border town. Physical and societal borders are where innovations and novel concepts are born. Creativity flourishes in these spaces. Film acts as a threshold between actuality and fantasy capturing the moment a border is established, defended, or overcome. The stories of our lives exist within these borderlands and movies bring those experiences to the screen.” said Dr. Brandon Chase Goldsmith, president of the River Valley Film Society and executive director of Fort Smith International Film Festival.

“The film festival acts as a catalyst for our area’s creative economy. Not only do movies ignite the imagination; they represent jobs from content creation and set construction to hair and make-up artists, to painters and costume designers,” said John McIntosh, vice-president of the River Valley Film Society and director of development for the festival.

“The Fort Smith International Film Festival gives Fort Smith the opportunity not only to view amazing independent films from all over the world but also allows us to share the beautiful city of Fort Smith with the rest of the world,” said Clay Pruitt, festival coordinator.

“We are delighted to once again be part of this event,” said Roger Holroyd, president for Arvest in Fort Smith and the River Valley. “In addition to recognizing the important role the arts play in our communities, Arvest values diversity of thoughts and ideas. We look forward to seeing what these filmmakers have created and also to showing our visitors what Fort Smith has to offer.”

Beginning Feb. 4, filmmakers may submit their film for the 2022 festival at <https://filmfreeway.com/FortSmithInternationalFilmFestival>. The entry fee per film ranges from \$10 for early birds to \$25 for later entries. Categories include people of color, indigenous, music video, animation, high school and college student short film, documentary, short and feature-length films.

For the inaugural festival, 396 films were submitted from 43 countries. Of those, 130 were screened during the festival.

Other fun facts:

- Coming up in February, the River Valley Film Society will provide details on a pre-festival, summer film series in Fort Smith and Van Buren that will also be themed “Borderlands” and run 130 films that ran in the inaugural festival.
- The Film Society has started an initiative to evaluate local high school media programs with a goal to get more student involvement in the film festival and to grow the area’s creative economy from the ground up. As a result, [a lighting kit was donated to the Future School of Fort Smith film club](#) with the help of Arvest.
- The River Valley Film Society has partnered with TGE, a global movie production company, to help facilitate the production of an [authentic film featuring Bass Reeves](#), the legendary lawman who was one of the first U.S. Deputy

Marshals west of the Mississippi and the longest-serving deputy in Judge Isaac. C. Parker's historic Western District of Arkansas federal court.

- TGE also has plans in the works to build a multi-million-dollar sound stage and movie studio at Chaffee Crossing in Fort Smith.

#####

Press Contacts

Brandon Goldsmith, president River Valley Film Society:
858-405-3278; fwrbrandon@hotmail.com

John Lovett, communications director for the River Valley Film Society: (479) 763-5929; johnslovett@gmail.com

Jennifer Caldwell, VP/Marketing Manager, Arvest Bank Fort Smith: (479) 573-1229; jcaldwell@arvest.com