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Fresno Filmmakers Forum conference attracts 150 potential filmmakers to city

Second annual full-day conference provided instruction and encouragement for both new and experienced filmmakers, and jobs, too.

Fresno, California, October 29, 2008 –The second annual **Fresno Filmmakers Forum** conference, held Saturday, October 25 in the city's historic **Tower District**, attracted about 150 people interested in filmmaking. The full-day conference presented seven guest speakers who provided the audience with specific details about writing scripts that are likely to get produced, raising money to fund a film, techniques used in film production, and other information to help filmmakers. They also shared inspirational stories about how they overcame obstacles to accomplish their goals.

The conference was hosted by Fresno Filmmakers Forum, a collaboration between the **City of Fresno**, local non-profit organization **Creative Fresno**, and Fresno-based production company **Entandem Productions**.

Speakers included twin brothers **Logan and Noah Miller**, who just completed their feature film "**Touching Home**" starring **Ed Harris**; **Dean Shull**, who produced the Lionsgate comedy feature "**Waiting...**"; **Marty Shindler**, a show business financial expert; **Peter Maris**, a producer of nearly three dozen movies and video games; **Alexis Fish** from the **Screen Actors Guild Indie** division who discussed the ins-and-outs of getting the best talent for a film; and documentarian **Kevin White**, founder of the Bay area's **Filmmakers Collaborative**.

"We drew people from such a broad range of the industry," said Entandem Productions' **Christine Autrand Mitchell**. "We had local filmmakers with decades of experience, like **John [Kelly, cinematographer]** and **Chuck [Carson, documentarian]**, chatting with speakers like **Marty Shindler**, who helped us understand the business

of filmmaking. And several new filmmakers and students were captivated by Dean Shull's funny stories about how 'Waiting...' found its way to the big screen."

"Kevin White had such great advice on getting a documentary off the ground, how to turn an idea into a real project," added Creative Fresno's Suzanne Bertz-Rosa. "And the Miller brothers, wow! They were so enthusiastic and inspiring, it was infectious!"

Ray Arthur, Fresno's Film and Entertainment Commissioner, praised all of the presenters.

"Peter Maris, who now calls Fresno home, is a prolific producer with lots of information to share. Alexis Fish helped us understand how filmmakers can get great actors for their films," noted Arthur.

Arthur is enthusiastic about the success of the conference and its potential to help the city by attracting more film and television projects.

"I know of four people who directly got work while talking to people at the conference," Arthur said. "And many others made networking connections and new relationships in the industry."

Fresno benefits from film and television production because the entertainment business is a low-impact industry that creates jobs, helps invigorate an area's economy (productions require food, transportation, laundry, props, and other local services), and boosts civic morale and pride.

"Besides aggressively nurturing filmmaking talent," added Arthur, "Fresno offers outstanding value to filmmakers. We provide free access to city property, we provide free film permits, and we offer lots of support. Fresno is a very film-friendly city. I keep hearing from filmmakers who visit the city and tell me, 'Fresno is so much cooler than you'd think!'"

Fresno is California's sixth largest and fastest growing city.

Arthur noted, too, that the Fresno Filmmakers Forum conference ticket prices were only \$20.00, while almost all other full-day show business conferences charge several hundred dollars.

"We will probably have to increase that to perhaps \$25.00 next year, considering the state of the economy, but we are committed to nurturing filmmaking talent," he added.

Planning for the 2009 Fresno Filmmakers Forum conference has already begun.

One outgrowth of the success of the conference is the decision to host free monthly meetings of Fresno Filmmakers Forum. The first meeting will be 6:00 p.m. Thursday, November 13, at **Milano**, a community-oriented Pizzeria/Italian restaurant located on the Historic Fulton Mall in Downtown Fresno.
