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WORLD PREMIERE FOR YUKON NORTHERN SIGHTS FINALISTS

WHITEHORSE – Three Yukon films selected as finalists in the Northern Sights competition had their world premiere at the Dawson International Short Film Festival, March 25 – 27.

Films by Werner Walcher, Mark Hill, Mitch Miyagawa and David Oppenheimer made the final cut in the competition, supported by the National Film Board of Canada and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission. Each finalist received \$15,000 from the film board to complete their films.

“The Yukon’s growing film industry is creating economic benefits, but we also need to ensure that our own stories are being told through film. The Northern Sights competition is an important part of our commitment to Yukon filmmakers and Yukon films,” Margarita Ramon, the Yukon film and sound commissioner said.

The National Film Board of Canada and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission also support the Dawson City International Short Film Festival in order to showcase northern film talent.

The second Northern Sights competition begins in October 2005. Thirty filmmakers will be eligible to attend a training forum in Whitehorse, where six will be chosen for further support and development.

Finalist Werner Walcher, filmmaker of *Dogs in Concert*, made an innovative and poetic film about working together as a team. With a unique visual perspective and sound treatment, the film explores the harmony and dynamics of dog sled teams from the dog’s perspective. This film explores the movements and sounds of a truly northern experience with captivating detail.

Our Town Faro, created by Mitch Miyagawa and David Oppenheimer, is about a town and a man. The town mine closed down, the people began to drift away and Faro was supposed to die. Yet Murray Hampton was determined to see the town survive.

Yukon Morning, made by Mark Hill, evokes an essence of life in the North. Beginning as though it was the 1890s, a young woman begins her day by doing chores at her rustic log cabin. As she prepares for the day, we discover she is like most of us.

“The Northern Sights competition encourages Yukon filmmakers to capture unique northern experiences,” director Werner Walcher said. “It was a great honour to be a finalist of the first Northern Sights competition and to have my film premiere at the Dawson International Short Film Festival.”

Modeled on other film development programs, the Northern Sights competition encourages creative filmmaking in both the documentary and animation realms and to work in a tight time frame while telling a good story.

For more information about the Northern Sights II competition, or any other filming initiatives, please contact the Yukon Film & Sound Commission at (867) 667-5400, www.reelyukon.com or visit 101 Elliot Street in Whitehorse.

Attachment: List of Yukon films receiving awards at Dawson City International Short Film Festival

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**DAWSON CITY INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
YUKON FILM AWARDS**

In addition to the Northern Sights finalists, a number of Yukon films received awards at the Dawson City International Short Film Festival.

MITY (Made in the Yukon) Professional Awards

First Place: Richard Lawrence and Rachel Grantham – Mother’s Day

Second Place: Carol Geddes - Two Winters: Tales from Above the Earth

MITY Emerging Talent Award

First Place: Greg and Doug Cote – Where there’s Smoke: A Summer of Fire in the Klondike

Second Place: Ken Madsen & Matthew Lien – Malkolm the Birder Boy: Quest for the Blue Throat

Runner-Up: Cathi Findlay-Brook, Hans Algotsson, Kerry Barber – The Handler

Honourable Mention: Jesse Mitchell – Untitled

Best Use of a Yukon Location: Susanne Aichelle - Bliss

ZED People’s Choice Award

First Place: Maciej Adamek – A Life to Live

Second Place: Greg and Doug Cote – Where there’s Smoke: A Summer of Fire in the Klondike

Honourable Mention:

Hannah Jickling and Valerie Salez – I’d Rather be Snow Shoveling

Sheila Jordon – Kathleen’s Closet

Lodestar Award (New this year!): The Door – Kott Vladimir