The definition of documentary is evolving, and here in Missouri, we are effecting the change in immediate ways. Two exciting programs were announced this month.

The University of Missouri - Columbia announced a gift of $6.7 million from Jonathan Murray (The Real World, Project Runway) Emmy Award-winning Mizzou alum, to create a new documentary journalism program in the university’s prominent School of Journalism. The university’s press release explains the new program is being established in response to the increasing demand for video content across multiple media platforms. Three new faculty positions will be created for the Bachelor of Journalism program to be offered in the fall of 2015. A Master of Arts degree will be offered in the future.

Our world renowned True/False Film Festival, which is in its 11th year and kicks off this week in Columbia, also made an industry rocking announcement with the launch of the organization’s new “Pay The Artists!” program. Co-conspirators of the fest, Paul Sturtz and David Wilson, initiated the sponsorship program as a way of helping sustain the documentary film ecosystem for nonfiction filmmakers whose works rarely gets a wide theatrical release. This year they are offering $450 to each filmmaking team that attends the festival, on top of travel, accommodation and food expenses the festival already provides. It is festival’s hope this amount will increase year-by-year and, eventually, be $1,000 per filmmaker. In a statement from festival organizers they explain, “If we are not all engaged in making independent filmmaking a sustainable enterprise, we will lose the very voices we exist to champion.”

One of the films True/False will champion this year is the Mo-filmed documentary Rich Hill, which just won the U.S. Grand Jury Prize for documentary at the Sundance Film Festival. If you can’t make it to True/False, have your own fest at home, with access to more than 100 Documentaries from Past True/False Film Festivals Online for Free.

The Missouri Film Commission approved its 2013 Film Commission Annual Report in December. The Film Commission will meet for the first time this year on Feb. 27, at the Truman Building in Jefferson City. Legislation, House Bill 1451, was introduced by Rep. Kathryn Swan, Cape Girardeau, and serves to extend the sunset on the film production tax incentive.

Do you have production news or photos from set to share? E-mail us at mofilm@ded.mo.gov.

SWP productions shot in St. Louis for a national ad campaign ... part of an indie horror/thriller was filmed in Memphis (Mo) ... Tremendous Entertainment shot a TV episode in Ironton ... Discovery’s Salvage City continues to shoot in St. Louis ... a commercial documentary project shot in Kansas City ... a Lifetime docu-series is shooting around St. Louis ... commercial production in Kansas City for Executive Airshare, St. Francis Health Center, Mazuma Credit Union and Banfield Pet Clinics ... a Hollywood Casino commercial shot in St. Louis
Did you miss the Columbia-filmed horror comedy, You’re Next, in theaters? Now you can get your own DVD copy of the sure-to-be cult classic. They even have a Lego character. For a scary double feature, pick-up Mizzou alumn Drew Stewart’s second feature, the friends-trapped-in-a-closet-by-a-psycho-killer flick Trapped.

St. Louis area filmmakers Catherine Dudley-Rose and Hannah Radcliff won Best Fantasy Film for their National Film Challenge entry film, Farewell. “Filmed in Lake St. Louis in November, the short film tells the story of a young woman struggling with ghosts from her past. The film was one of 150+ entries from 10 countries.

Beth Pike, Stephen Hudnell of Orr Street Productions and The Missouri Press Association won the Best Foreign Film Award from the China Academy Awards of Documentary Film in Beijing for their doc, Deadline in Disaster.

Kelly Gregory and Thom Pancella, with the Missouri Institute of Mental Health and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, will screen their film Good Golly Miss Molly! A Family’s Transition Story as part of the 13th Picture This… Film Festival in Calgary, Canada. The festival is the largest devoted to productions by and/or about persons with disabilities. The film documents the transition of Molly Thomas, a developmentally disabled girl who was placed in a Missouri institution at four years old, until she was released 58 years later.

Four Ozark natives appear in the short film Ordinary Mountaineers which will have its Springfield debut Feb. 27 at a free screening held at the Oasis Convention Center. The film follows a group of ordinary folks, including a Branson high school teacher, a bottling plant technician from Joplin, a lawyer from Springfield and a backpacker from Springfield, as they climb Mount Pisco, a 3.5-mile high, snow-covered peak in Peru.

In recognition of St. Louis’ 250th anniversary, the Missouri History Museum hosts a yearlong exhibit, "250 in 250." The exhibit highlights 50 people, 50 places, 50 images, 50 moments and 50 objects. Two films are included – a short, 250 Years in 250 Seconds, and a silent film that wraps-up the exhibit, entitled A Portrait of St. Louis at 250 Years.

Ozark Public Television’s annual PBS Kids Writers Contest is now open. Promoting the advancement of children’s literacy skills, the contest encourages kids, grades K-3, to celebrate creativity by writing and illustrating their own original stories. The deadline for local entries is Monday, March 31. The winner will be entered into the national contest where they have the chance to be featured on pbskids.org.

The Sham Film Festival debuts in St. Louis in October. The festival is a celebration of mockery, spoofs, and satire. Filmmakers are encouraged to hilariously mock whatever and whomever they want. Submissions accepted through September 1. Categories including: movie trailer; mockumentary; commercial; music video; and PSA. The grand prize winner receives the coveted “Palm’d Oar Trophy.”

CinemaKC has opened a call for entries for films to feature during their 4th season of the CinemaKC television series, spotlighting regional filmmakers. For the first time, they are expanding outside Kansas City to feature Missouri (and Kansas) filmmakers, state-wide. Chosen filmmakers will be paid and featured in a segment or full episode. The show is broadcast to thousands of stations throughout the Midwest.

This weekend in St. Joseph, Missouri State Western University will hold a 48 Hour Film Competition. Filmmakers have 48 hours to create a 4-7 minute short film, with the challenge of using a specific prop, line of dialogue, and a character in the film. The competition is open to all area high school/university students.
Cedar Creek Center, New Haven

Cedar Creek Center, located in the rolling hills of Missouri Wine Country, just west of downtown New Haven, boasts a rich history dating to the Louisiana Purchase. The property consists of several versatile and picturesque settings for filming, including: a manor house; cottages; western town with brewery/saloon and working wagons; 9 hole golf course; tennis courts; saltwater pool; two red barns with stables; hiking/ biking trails; and a 7-acre fishing lake. Many opportunities on the site offer panoramic views of the surrounding Missouri countryside.

Cedar Creek offers getaways such as corporate retreats, family reunions and destination weddings.

If you would like to scout this location, e-mail andrea.sporcic@ded.mo.gov

Headlines

Remembering Harold Ramis, Honorary St. Louisan
his portion of the “Animal House’ script was based on his experiences in the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity at Washington University. “I can still remember two of the four years I was there,” he said.

Lawmakers pressure Missouri for tax credits

Money for the arts can help fuel Kansas City’s economy
Funding for a Film Commission is back in the budget proposal

Missouri native discusses Hollywood’s Oscar Week mentality

Finding cinematic gold in Missouri
Missouri has a storied history in film

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City highlights ties to real Monuments Men

Lavell Crawford takes home Screen Actors Guild award with ‘Breaking Bad’ cast
The St. Louis native had a recurring role as Hugh Babineaux – a multitasking security guard

Casting call for St. Louis reality show about rich twenty-somethings

St. Louis man creates his own – more accurate – Facebook ‘Look Back’ video
The video has gone viral and has been picked up by FunnyOrDie.com

'The Doctors' Host, Parkway West HS Grad Dr. Travis Stork On Dieting

Free spring film festival held at Missouri S&T

St. Louis native discusses Hollywood's Oscar Week mentality

Shan Keith goes ‘Under the Gunn’

Discover 'What Matters?’

STL reps on Reality TV