

# **BIFF wraps successful run**

**By Clint Wolf [cwolf@beloitdailynews.com](mailto:cwolf@beloitdailynews.com) | Posted: Monday, February 24, 2014 4:00 pm**

Expanding the Beloit International Film Festival from four days to 10 days presented its challenges, but the extra work and planning seems to have paid off.

Rod Beaudoin, executive director of the Beloit International Film Festival (BIFF) said ticket sales were up by a third this year compared to last year's sales.

Coupled with that was the reaction of the people who enjoyed the films and the events this year.

"The reading I am getting off the streets is they liked what we had to offer, so it was a great success," Beaudoin said Sunday as BIFF was winding up.

The final weekend of the film festival kicked off Friday with the Sound of Music Sing-Along held at the Eclipse Center. That event was followed on Saturday evening with a traditional BIFF favorite, the Silent Film Showcase, featuring three Charlie Chaplin short films and live music furnished by the Beloit Janesville Symphony. Although the short films were made nearly 100 years ago, the laughs they generated were fresh and the musical accompaniment was stirring.

Laughter seemed to be a big drawing point this year for BIFF, according to Beaudoin. The planners of the film festival decided to feature a number of comedies this year, which turned out to be popular with BIFF audiences. Beaudoin said comedies that went over well with BIFF crowds this year included Jake Squared and Date America.

"All of us have gone through so much with the economy the way it has been, we decided we needed something to lighten things up," Beaudoin said about featuring more comedies.

He said the only regret he had was that the comedies may have overshadowed some of the more serious films, such as Night Lights — a film about a woman's relationship with her brother who is autistic.

"That was an amazing film," Beaudoin said.

Gaining in popularity this year was the BIFF Plus Music. Beaudoin said, even though it only is in its second year as a BIFF feature, the music at downtown Beloit venues went over very well. This year, there was no cover charge for patrons to enjoy the music, but they were asked to give a dollar if they wanted to vote for their favorite musicians.

Even though the 10-day stretch of the film festival has ended, BIFF goes on as the board of directors plan for BIFF Year-Round and BIFF Outdoors events.

Last year was the first time movies were shown on an inflatable outdoor screen provided thanks to First National Bank and Trust. Beaudoin said the board will meet in March to start planning films to be shown and venues for the BIFF Outdoors showing and the BIFF Year-Round events. He said BIFF is looking for sponsors of individual showings this year.

With the expanded run of BIFF and the events held throughout the year, Beaudoin said a special thanks is due to all the volunteers who helped. He said hundreds of people volunteer their time to make sure the film festival and events held throughout the year are a success.