

# FINAL PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR FILM FESTIVAL

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BDN file photo (From left): Max Maiken, Marty Densch and Rod Beaudoin pose for a photo. Maiken will be officially taking over for Beaudoin as BIFF executive director after this year's BIFF. Densch is serves as president of BIFF's Board of Directors. This year's BIFF will be from Feb. 24 to March 5.

BELOIT — Filmmakers soon will bring their movies from across the world to the downtown area during the Beloit International Film Festival, and organizers say they are ready.

BIFF Assistant Director Max Maiken said organizers are in the home stretch of planning, including finalizing the films, events and programs. Maiken said filmmakers from all corners of the world — including Japan, Libya, France and Germany — will be showing their movies.

The 12th annual BIFF is scheduled from Feb. 24 to March 5, and it will screen approximately 100 independent films that will include narrative features, documentaries and shorts.

This year's BIFF is a week later than previous years.

“By pushing the dates back a week this year we were able to accommodate a lot of talented people joining us...and maybe include a few more snowbirds,” said Rod Beaudoin, BIFF executive director.

The films will be presented at five downtown venues including Domenico’s, the Hendricks Center for the Arts, Bagels and More, Bushel and Peck’s Local Market and La Casa Grande. Events also are scheduled at Schubert’s Luxury Ten Cinema on Cranston Road and at Beloit Memorial High School (BMHS) for the first time.

“(BIFF) creates this really unique event that livens up Beloit,” Maiken said. “It really captures the best of what Beloit has to offer in the community and how the community operates.”

This year, Maiken said the BIFF team is bringing back a few events, including a Reveal Party and a live performance of a classic film.

A date in early February is expected for the Reveal Party.

“Film fans can obtain the first copies of the printed program, hear from staff about films on their favorites list and see some of the trailers,” Maiken said.

Maiken said there will be a film acted out live and broadcast on WCLO.

“Before television, it’s what radio would’ve been like,” Maiken said. “We’re really excited to bring it back.”

Maiken said the BIFF team is still in the planning stages for these events and will announce more details soon.

During the festival, BIFF favorites also will be back, including the Silent Film Showcase on March 4 at BMHS. The showcase will feature music from BMHS’s Jazz Orchestra, under the direction of Chris Behrens, and will feature the 1925 silent film “The

Freshman,” starring Harold Lloyd. Other BIFF staples also are back, such as the Sing Along Film at the Luxury 10 on March 3. BIFF will have film screenings beginning at noon on the weekends and during each week night.

The festival will kick off with the annual Wisconsin-Illinois Showdown, where attendees will vote on films by new and established filmmakers in the region. Wisconsin has taken the top awards the past two years.

Maiken will be taking over for Beaudoin as BIFF executive director after this year’s film festival. Maiken said he will likely take over for Beaudoin in April.

“I’m very excited for it,” Maiken said. “I think (BIFF’s) in a good position. Looking ahead, I’m excited to further work with the community and supporters of BIFF and work in Beloit.”

On Beaudoin leaving, Maiken said though he may not have an official title at BIFF, Beaudoin will likely not be completely finished with the festival he co-founded.

“It’s not like it’s a final farewell...and we’ll welcome him with any ideas he may have,” Maiken said.

Beaudoin, 62, will be stepping down from his role with BIFF to fully focus on programming a Hollywood Film Festival channel. The channel will be available on Roku and Apple TV in the spring of 2017. He has been developing it for the past year-and-a-half. The video streaming channel will be similar to Netflix or Amazon Prime, except participants will pay a small fee per film they watch.

Tickets to BIFF films will be available online for \$9 plus a purchase fee. In mid-February, the BIFF Box Office will open for tickets sales at Gallery ABBA, located in the Center for Entrepreneurship in Liberal Education at Beloit (CELEB) at 437 East Grand Ave., Beloit. For more information, visit [beloitfilmfest.org](http://beloitfilmfest.org).

