

BIFF unveils strategic plan

By **WHITNEY HELM** Staff writer | **Posted: Friday, November 13, 2015 4:00 pm**

BELOIT — The Beloit International Film Festival is planning for its next 10 years.

At a community forum held Thursday at the Beloit Public Library, organizers of the festival unveiled its 10-year strategic plan.

Among other events, the festival is now affiliated with the Hollywood Film Festival based in California. It will be a pilot program for the two organizations. BIFF Executive Director Rod Beaudoin was named the executive director for the Hollywood festival in September and last week was voted president of the festival.

The Hollywood Film Festival was founded in 1997 by author and producer Carlos de Abreu and his wife, Janice Pennington. In 2013, CineCause, an organization advocating for social impact filmmaking, acquired the Hollywood Film Festival and CineCause owner Jon Fitzgerald became festival executive director. In July of this year, Brad Parks bought out CineCause and he named Beaudoin executive director of the festival, according to an article in the Los Angeles Times.

The partnership will allow BIFF access to more than 3,000 additional movies a year.

"From the start of the BIFF festival 11 years ago, we have 3,800 entries. At the Hollywood Film Festival there were 3,000 submitted this year," Beaudoin said. "(It's) broadening our ability to select films."

This isn't the first venture for BIFF in trying to begin an affiliation with another festival. Beaudoin said that he tried to work with the Julien Dubuque International Film Festival a number of years ago, but the deal fell through.

In addition to access to more films, the festival will be able to grow its staff, using Hollywood Film Festival to help supplement wages and lessen the cost to BIFF. This is especially helpful when competing film festivals like Milwaukee have 20 full-time staff members and more than 90 interns. BIFF typically has one full-time staff member, along with Beaudoin and a host of five part-time staff and volunteers.

There also will be a better opportunity for film-makers to have their work seen outside of the city, Hollywood Film Festival will be launching an Apple TV channel showing high-definition film shorts and films which BIFF will now have access to.

"It'll be a positive to BIFF," Beaudoin said.

Beaudoin has been leading the Beloit International Film Festival since it began in 2006.

The festival shows films throughout the downtown Beloit business district and it has branched out beyond the festival in February to offer BIFF Year-round, featuring film favorites from the festival, and BIFF Outdoors, which offers free family-friendly films shown on an inflatable screen in several outdoor venues.

The Hollywood Film Festival takes place in the fall in California and BIFF is set to take place Feb. 19 - 28 in Beloit.