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**“The Canadian Audiovisual Industry – We Mean Business.”**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you Linda [Wood, Film Nova Scotia].

Good afternoon. Bonjour.

I would like to thank the Halifax Chamber of Commerce for inviting me to speak to you today. It’s an honour to be in your company. It’s also a pleasure to be back in Halifax.

Thanks to our sponsors, Film Nova Scotia and DHX Media, as well as to our esteemed head table.

I am thrilled to be attending the opening of the Atlantic Film Festival this evening – a premiere showcase for the best international and Canadian films of the past year. The Festival is also celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Strategic Partners, one of the world's pre-eminent international co-production markets. Congratulations to its director Jan Miller!

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce has a long and proud tradition as the voice of business since 1750.

My topic today is very much about business. Like the members of the Chamber, the businesses that Telefilm supports are small- and medium-sized companies led by true entrepreneurs at heart who dare to dream, who tackle challenges, and who see and seize opportunities.

I am, of course, speaking of producers who are responsible for the films and television programs that are consumed in our movie theatres, seen on television, rented or bought as DVDs or Blu-ray copies for home entertainment and increasingly viewed on the Internet.

We all know how important the Internet has become giving Canadians easy access to content.

In some ways, Telefilm, which has a mandate to support and promote the audiovisual industry, plays a role similar to the Chamber – we both help businesses grow.

I'd like to focus my comments today on three topics: first, explain how the audiovisual industry contributes to our economy; secondly, share with you what Telefilm is doing to support this sector of activity; and thirdly, invite the Halifax Chamber of Commerce to help promote this sector whose footprint extends far beyond our local communities.

## **CANADA'S AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY – AN UNTOLD SUCCESS STORY<sup>1</sup>**

Canada's audiovisual industry is one of our country's untold success stories.

We are privileged to be a partner to creative pioneers and entrepreneurs. As long as there has been a private television and film industry, Telefilm has been a vital part of its evolution.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics included in this section have been taken from *Profile 2011: An Economic Report of the Screen-based Industry in Canada*, 2011.

In more than four decades, we have been a witness to a growing and expanding industry that has reached an impressive level of maturity, production capacity and standing on the world stage. Take a minute to see what I mean.

### **2-minute video presentation**

Behind these award-winning television programs and films are thousands of people whose companies provide a range of services such as equipment rental, lighting, special effects, set construction, and costume design, as well as creative and technical talent. Many people rely on this sector for their livelihood. Every year, there are economic benefits brought to our communities and attractive career paths provided to thousands of young Canadians.

Nationally, this sector is a major source of economic activity and jobs for Canadians right across the country. The volume of audiovisual production in Canada, which also includes TV and games, reached \$5.5 billion in 2010-2011 – its highest level ever.

The industry employed 128,000 people and generated a GDP of \$7.46 billion for the Canadian economy.

The jobs created in Nova Scotia alone totalled 2,200 and 3,600 for the entire Atlantic Region.

Last year, Canada produced 600 television series, 90 theatrical feature films and several hundred short films.

The same industry had an export value of over \$2 billion – its highest level in seven years. You may also be surprised to learn that our television programs and films are sold in more than 100 countries around the world.

I hope you're as impressed as I am.

The United Nations identified social, cultural and economic benefits of this economy as follows: “The creative industries [...] enable [...] regions to tell their own stories and to project their own unique cultural identities to themselves and to the world but they also provide [...] a source of economic growth, employment creation and increased participation in the global economy.<sup>2</sup>”

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<sup>2</sup> Nova Scotia Department of Communities, *Culture and Heritage Creative Economy Literature Review*, February 14, 2012.

## Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Region

With a 25-year long track record, the audiovisual industry in Nova Scotia is very well established. The province is ranked the fourth largest production centre in the country, with an average annual production of about \$115 million dollars.<sup>3</sup>

I would like to take this opportunity to give you a quick snapshot of the award-winning creative talent that resides right here in this region.

If you saw this morning's Chronicle Herald Arts section, you'll know what I mean.

Led by an Oscar-winning producer (for the landmark documentary *Bowling for Columbine*) and a community leader, Michael Donovan's Halifax-based company DHX Media produces and distributes television and interactive content for children, family and youth audiences.

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<sup>3</sup> Film Nova Scotia Business Plan 2012-2013.



The company recently expanded by buying Cookie Jar Entertainment – making DHX Media one of the largest production companies in Canada and the largest in the world for children’s productions.

Nova Scotia is also home to several award-winning filmmakers who have made Telefilm proud. The film team of Rob Cotterill, Jason Eisener and John Davies launched the genre film *Hobo with a Shotgun* to audience and critical acclaim in 2011. The film debuted to great reviews at the Sundance Film Festival, and was chosen as one of the Best of Canada by the Toronto International Film Festival.

There is also Shandi Mitchell who directed the ambitious lost-at-sea drama *The Disappeared*, this year’s Gala presentation at the Atlantic Film Festival. Gilles Bélanger, Walter Forsyth, Karen Franklin and Ralph Holt are the producers. Shandi is also an acclaimed writer. Her debut novel *Under This Unbroken Sky* was sold in nine countries and received awards from around the world.

And what about *Beat Down*, an irreverent comedy about wrestling, family and following your dreams. The film is directed by St. John's native Deanne Foley and produced by Paul Pope, who has been a dynamic force in the Canadian film industry for 30 years.

Elsewhere, *Roller Town*, the debut film of Andrew Bush, is available in 100 million US homes on VOD. Andrew is a Halifax-based writer/actor/director. Producers Bill Niven and Jay Dahl are here with us today.

I would like to recognize some of the other amazing local talent with us today: Michael Melski, director of the film *Charlie Zone*, which sold to 12 countries; *Haven* TV series producer David MacLeod; Gia Milani, who is directing her first feature *All The Wrong Reasons* here in Halifax; as well as two of the filmmakers behind *Faith, Fraud & Minimum Wage*, Josh MacDonald and Beverly Bliss.

And of course, the successes go beyond this part of the country.

We need only to think of the immensely popular series *Republic of Doyle*, which debuted in 2010 on CBC Television and is still going strong, resonating with weekly audiences of more than a million. Shot in St. John's, the hit show not only sustains 110 full-time local jobs, but has been a surprising tourist attraction for the city.

Even actor Russell Crowe appeared in the *Republic of Doyle*!

Filmmaker and actor Don McKellar is currently filming the English-language remake of the Quebec comedy smash *The Grand Seduction* in Newfoundland. The film has an awesome cast and crew, including young Canadian star Taylor Kitsch as well as local film and TV personality Mary Walsh. It is also coproduced with St. John's Barbara Doran.

We could also mention *Blackbird* by Jason Buxton.

Want more local stars? How many of you have seen award-winning and talented Ellen Page in Woody Allen's new film, *To Rome with Love*? Don't forget she started here, in Halifax, with her debut in *Trailer Park Boys*.

There is no doubt that this extraordinary local talent in all its facets – writing, producing, directing and acting – was first developed by working on homegrown productions that are also international draws for films that are shot in this region.

**TELEFILM CANADA IS PROUD TO BE SUPPORTING THE**  
**AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY**

These examples no doubt illustrate the diversity and breadth of the talent in this country.

However, Telefilm is not alone in supporting this sector with valued partners such as Film Nova Scotia, as well as funding initiatives such as provincial tax credits. Together, our financial support leverages and stimulates investment, creates employment and promotes the industry in global markets.

For our part, we have 200 employees working in four offices: Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. I know many of you have had the opportunity to meet Gordon Whittaker, Regional Director in our Halifax office.

We are also privileged to have Grant Machum, a partner at Stewart Mc Kilvey, as a Telefilm Board member.

Our annual budget was \$115 million last year, the equivalent of one feature film in the U.S. And, with this budget, we support 60 Canadian films each year and must also fund their marketing campaigns. We are present throughout the entire value chain: in development, production, distribution, and, increasingly, promotion.

Via our partner, the Canada Media Fund and its Convergent Stream, support was also provided for 444 television programs and 117 associated digital media products, including games, interactive Web content, on-demand programming, podcasts, Webisodes and a range of mobile applications.

Ironically, it is precisely because of the success of the industry that we face challenges in financing and promotion. Your Chamber understands well what businesses require for growth – new partnerships and alliances, funding to conduct R&D, manage IP, and find new markets.

Notre industrie s'adapte également à des changements rapides, qui auraient été impensables lorsque Téléfilm a été créée il y a plus de 40 ans.

New business models are being tested for distribution, causing fragmentation but also opening the door to engage audiences in ways not previously possible.

Twenty years ago, there was no World Wide Web, Google was only a dream and the creator of Facebook was just starting school... elementary school!

There are also new economic realities that federal agencies such as Telefilm must confront – ones that compel us to be innovative.

We created a new private donation initiative, the Talent Fund, which represents an opportunity to raise private sector investment for this industry. Individual Canadians and corporations can support the production, distribution and promotion of Canadian films.

Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in supporting the Fund said: “Canadian filmmakers make all of us proud. We follow their triumphs around the globe – at the Oscars, Golden Globes and Césars. Yet, we need to provide better and stronger support to Canadian film production and talent.”

Telefilm estimates that the Fund could be endowed with an annual budget of \$5 million, a significant amount for our Canadian producers to leverage investment dollars. The Fund will also help create some new 150 jobs every year.



I am also pleased to announce that this initiative has been recognized by the CRTC as eligible to receive funding from broadcasting distribution entities licensed by the Commission. This paves the way for greater investment in our industry by Canadian cable and satellite distribution companies in the future.

Telefilm recently had the pleasure of announcing the names of five business and community leaders who will drive the pan-Canadian promotion of this fund. Among them are Mr. Mark Dobbin, Founder & President of Killick Capital from Newfoundland, who sends his greetings but unfortunately could not attend.

Mr. Dobbin and the other distinguished members of the Committee will have the task of raising the visibility of the Fund among potential donors, as well as finding inventive ways to inspire corporations – like yours – to invest in Canada’s audiovisual industry.

New financing will allow us to preserve the pool of expertise that Canada has developed and that is now recognized around the world. This expertise depends on a critical mass – a constant volume of production financed year in and year out that enables Canadian talent to perfect their skills.

Continued support will also allow Canadian companies to seize distribution opportunities for Canadian films and television programs that arise from market globalization and the shift to new distribution platforms.

Last year, Canada had co-production projects with more than 60 countries, representing foreign investments in excess of \$230 million. Canadian companies are highly sought after because of their creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and success.

Canadian Oscar nominees, such as *Incendies*, *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Barney's Version*, as well as local success stories such as *Hobo with a Shotgun*, travel the world over and provide incredible branding opportunities for Canada.

Promotion is another of the industry's challenges and one that Telefilm is confronting head on. The industry's transition to an all digital world means we have to be both creative and aggressive in promoting Canadian talent on every screen, small or big, and to do it in collaboration with broadcasters, distributors and producers.

We are counting on you to spread the good news.

Despite our successes, Canadian cinema holds a modest share of the national market while our neighbour, the United States, largely monopolizes our screens and our audiences.

On average, Canadians only go to the movies three times a year. Once they have seen *The Dark Knight Rises*, the *Twilight* series, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, or the latest romantic comedy, there is little room left for homegrown cinema. Fortunately, Canadian content is viewed in places other than movie theatres: DVD, VOD, and other digital platforms.

This new reality prompted Telefilm to introduce a Success Index that reflects the true reach of our films as domestic box office is no longer the only way to reach audiences.

Both a promotional and management tool, the Index measures the year-over-year results for the commercial, cultural and industrial success of films we support. In one year, the Index has already increased from the base benchmark of 100 to 123.7 due to the strong domestic and international sales of our films.

As a first critical step in working more closely with our industry partners, Telefilm will be hosting in collaboration with the CRTC and the Canada Media Fund a symposium on the promotion of Canadian content this Fall. I am confident that this will lead to an industry-wide strategy for the promotion of our audiovisual works.

En ce qui a trait à la scène internationale, il me fait plaisir d'annoncer que le Canada sera honoré à l'occasion du plus important marché de la télévision et des médias numériques du monde qui se tiendra en France, le MIPCOM.

Without question, foreign markets offer important opportunities to Canadian creators to reach new international audiences. Foreign partnerships provide additional resources to create high-quality productions with broad appeal. Our higher-budget productions simply cannot be made without international partners.

Thanks to Strategic Partners for helping us with that!

On the topic of partnerships, our first-ever *Tribute to Canadian Talent* at the Cannes Film Festival this year was a successful promotional initiative in conjunction with Canada's luxury jeweller Birks. This event unveiled two recipients of the inaugural Birks Canadian Diamond Award, Sarah Gadon and Emily Hampshire, who have both made their mark on the film industry with exceptional acting performances.

## **THE HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY**

As the Chamber is well aware, growing businesses need financing to enhance their viability, productivity and competitiveness. They need to invest in people. And they need solid economic foundations for sustainable growth. Canada's audiovisual industry is responsible for the production of independent films and television programs that rank among the best on the world's screens.

Today, we are asking you to keep the momentum of this industry alive.

Fortunately, Nova Scotia is blessed with a wealth of creative resources; however, those who work in this industry know that much existing potential is still unrealized.

We have no reason to be modest. Our films and television shows have won countless awards around the world. Our talented actors like Ellen Page are making movies with Oscar-winning directors.

This is an industry of pioneers; the combination of vision and determination that have helped built what we have today will continue to keep it dynamic and successful for a long time yet to come.

I invite you to add at least two Canadian films to your “must see” lists this year. You can start with the films found in the DVD two-pack on your table: we have included George Mihalka’s *Faith, Fraud & Minimum Wage*, based on real-life incidents in Nova Scotia that generated international headlines, and the 2012 Best Foreign Language Film Oscar finalist *Monsieur Lazhar* from director Philippe Falardeau.

Many good films will also hit the big screen soon.

And don’t forget to check out *Beat Down* – now playing in your local Empire Theatre! Thanks to Empire for its support of Canadian films.

I also encourage you to find out more about our new private donation fund and see how you can play a part in it. Or give some thought on how the Chamber may get involved and partner with us to promote the audiovisual industry. The rewards of these initiatives will be many.



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Thank you. Merci.