

SASKATCHEWAN FILMPOOL OPERATI

# Film pool celebrates 36th year

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Although the technology has changed, Gordon Pepper admits that after more than three decades, the Saskatchewan Film Pool Cooperative's mandate — to support independent visionary filmmaking — has remained the same.

"The core mandate of the film pool is to give people an opportunity to make their own product. So, in other words, they have to have 100 per cent creative control over their product," said Pepper, the organization's executive director.

"We believe that you make a really strong piece of work if you are personally engaged (and) passionate about it."

On Saturday, Pepper and others in the community celebrated the 36th anniversary of the film pool's launch at its Scarth Street office with a showing of *Wheat Soup* — Regina's first locally produced dramatic feature film, which debuted in 1987.

The non-profit, artist-run centre has three staff members, including Pepper, and about 160 members. It hosts nearly 50 events a year. Primary funding sources are the Canada Council for the Arts and the Saskatchewan Arts Board. The City of Regina and the National Film Board of Canada also offer financial support, said Pepper.

To help residents realize their vision and make their own film — whether they have experience or not — the organization offers workshops, small grants, equipment and networking.

policy. Anybody can just walk in off the street," he explained.

Pepper has been executive director for five years, but has spent most of his life working in film production.

One thing that surprises him about younger filmmakers who attend the organization's film camp each summer is how knowledgeable they are — both of movies but also moviemaking technology.

"They pick up on it so fast," said Pepper.

As well, there are more opportunities for filmmakers to show their work.

"There are way more festivals now than there were 10 or 15 years ago for people to show their films. Of course, the Internet has opened things up. You can put your film up online right away," he said.

"Everyone makes a film for it to be seen by somebody. You don't make a film just to put in your closet."

Overall, Pepper said the organization is growing, but needs to do a better job creating a film culture in the province where residents recognize and celebrate filmmakers. To achieve this goal, the film pool has an outreach program to try and attract new filmmakers. Pepper also said the organization is looking at possibly giving awards to filmmakers to help promote the industry.

"It just makes sense to see stories that come out from your own people, from your own culture," said Pepper. "It kind of makes you feel good when you see a film that speaks about your own place, your own identity."

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Gordon Pepper, executive director of the Saskatchewan Film Pool Cooperative, at the

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