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WORKING FILMS' 2023 RURAL CINEMA SUPPORTS FIVE ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESSING CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Now in its fourth year, organizations selected for Rural Cinema receive training, funding, and solar-powered film screening equipment to support their efforts.

Wilmington, North Carolina (March 22, 2023) — Working Films, the North Carolina based nonprofit that brings the worlds of documentary filmmaking and social justice together, announced the 2023 Rural Cinema cohort. Each year, Rural Cinema supports five organizations in rural areas and small towns across the country who are working for environmental justice, including those directly affected by polluting industries or climate disasters. Each selected organization will receive \$7,500 in monetary support, training in Working Films approach and learnings from 22 years utilizing films for change, and solar powered screening equipment from EPIC Outdoor Cinema to organize film screenings in their communities.

“From pipelines to CAFOs, these organizations are up against entities that are polluting their homes and wrecking the climate. We are honored to get to work with these leaders as they empower their communities to work together and push back against these injustices,” said Working Films’ Director of Campaigns and Strategy Andy Myers. “Film screenings provide the perfect platform for leaders to create this space to gather their community and watch a movie about an issue that mirrors their own experience, and shows how other towns successfully fought back.”

The 2023 Rural Cinema cohort includes:

7 Directions of Service (Pleasant Grove, NC) - Founded by frontline activists Dr. Crystal Cavalier-Keck and Jason Crazy Bear Keck, 7 Directions of Service (7DS) is an Indigenous-led environmental justice and community organizing collective based on Crystal’s ancestral Occaneechi-Saponi homelands in rural NC. Their current mission involves canceling the Mountain Valley Pipeline/Southgate Extension and campaigning for legal Rights of Nature laws in NC. 7DS is striving towards a long-term vision of rematriation and Indigenous-led food justice by developing their community garden into a hands-on learning and cultural center.

[Environmental Justice Community Action Network](#) (Sampson County NC) - Environmental Justice Community Action Network (EJCAN) is an organization focused on, and dedicated to, achieving environmental justice around North Carolina. EJCAN focuses on issues that have a significant impact on health, economic outcomes, and quality of life for residents in the state.

[Iowa CCI](#) (Scott County, Iowa) - The mission of Iowa CCI is to empower and unite grassroots people of all ethnic backgrounds to take control of their communities; involve them in identifying problems and needs and in taking action to address them; and be a vehicle for social, economic, and environmental justice.

[Kansas Rural Center & Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation](#) (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation) - The mission of Kansas Rural Center is to promote the long-term health of the land and its people through research, education, and advocacy that advance an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just food and farming system. The Kansas Rural Center will be working with members of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation located on Prairie Band Potawatomi land, currently known as Jackson County, Kansas.

Safe, Affordable, Good Energy (SAGE TN) (Cookeville, TN)

Safe, Affordable, Good Energy for Tennessee (SAGE TN) brings together community members in Tennessee's Upper Cumberland fighting a proposed "natural" gas pipeline in our region. The 122-mile Ridgeline Expansion Project would be owned by Enbridge, but is part of the Tennessee Valley Authority's proposal to replace their coal-powered Kingston Fossil Plant with gas. Formed at the end of 2022, SAGE is working to stop these gas plans and instead urging TVA to choose a cleaner, more affordable plant replacement. We believe in energy systems that support clean water, public safety, and environmental justice, and envision a future of local and sustainable energy in the Upper Cumberland.

The five selected organizations will participate in Rural Cinema's virtual training institute covering Working Films' *Eight Elements of Putting Films to Work*, a curriculum focused on best practices for using documentary film as a resource for positive change in their local communities. At the end of the training and through individualized consultation, community leaders will organize multiple screening events over the course of one year, utilizing documentary films to advance their local efforts to move people to action on critical issues facing their area.

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About Rural Cinema

Launched in 2020, Rural Cinema has provided training and support to 32 environmental leaders and organized over 50 film screenings in rural areas and small towns across the United States. In 2023, Rural Cinema will focus on supporting organizations in rural areas or small towns across the country that are directly affected by polluting industries or climate disasters, as well

as areas transitioning from being economically fueled by extractive energy industries to adopting more sustainable approaches.

About Working Films

Founded in 1999, Working Films is a national nonprofit organization based in North Carolina that leverages the power of documentary films to advance social justice and environmental protection. For more information, visit: www.workingfilms.org.