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Ticket Sales Up and Overall Satisfaction High at RiverRun International Film Festival

WINSTON-SALEM, North Carolina – Every year about this time, with its fiscal year drawing to a close, the RiverRun International Film Festival takes a moment to evaluate the recently concluded festival in order to make plans for the coming year. Typically the festival has good news to report. This year, however, the news is outstanding. Based on box office data, direct community feedback and results from an exhaustive audience survey completed by Quest Analysis, it's clear that 2007-08 was a watershed year for RiverRun.

The biggest highlight from the 10th annual RiverRun was the tremendous increase in box office sales. Because of the downturn in the economy, the festival had only budgeted for a modest 6 percent increase in total sales – or \$56,000. Instead, due to the increased awareness of RiverRun's programs and a growing excitement about the festival's films, box office sales rapidly outpaced all previous years and reached \$71,781, a 35 percent increase over 2007. Related to that increase, the total number of tickets issued increased 41 percent over last year (10,567 tickets in 2008 compared to 7,516 in 2007).

"We're extremely pleased to be able to generate a greater portion of our income directly from box office sales," said RiverRun Executive Director Andrew Rodgers. "But while ticket sales were really up this year, they still only account for about 15 percent of our total budget. Corporate support, grants and private donations enable us to achieve the needed operating capital. Like RiverRun, most other film festivals around the country depend heavily on non-ticket revenue to support their operation."

Additionally, the festival engaged Winston-Salem-based market research company Quest Analysis to conduct an in-depth survey of 2008 RiverRun attendees to establish audience demographic details and economic impact results. Anecdotally, the festival has known that its audience was very affluent and highly educated, but this survey established that beyond a doubt. Based on the survey results, 86 percent of 2008 RiverRun attendees have obtained at least a 4-year college degree, while 44 percent have a Masters degree or higher. Additionally, more than a third of all attendees make more than \$120,000 per year and more than one-in-three attendees lives outside Winston-Salem. In fact, it was established that the average distance traveled to attend RiverRun is 74 miles. And, in a sign that the Festival's influence is spreading, the survey showed that **9 percent of all attendees live outside North Carolina.**

"There's no doubt about it. This was a great year for RiverRun in terms of ticket sales and community support for the festival," said RiverRun Executive Director Andrew Rodgers. "The overall positive response to the festival, as evidenced by the survey, was also great to see. We're thrilled to see the momentum behind RiverRun continue to grow and believe the festival has an extremely bright future."

Rodgers further stated that RiverRun is exploring some new avenues for the decade-old festival, including possible screenings of "best in show" films in the fall of 2008.

About RiverRun: Founded in 1998, RiverRun is a competitive event that strives to present diverse cinematic voices and showcase strong new works from both established and emerging filmmakers. Each spring, RiverRun screens new narrative, documentary, short, student and animated films, offering both audience and jury prizes in competition categories. The Festival also presents a broad range of special events each year, including high-profile regional premieres of significant films, celebrity tributes, family matinees and classic retrospectives as well as a full complement of panel discussions and parties. For more information about the festival visit www.riverrunfilm.com.

About Quest Analysis: Quest Analysis is a woman-owned full-service market research company based in Winston-Salem that focuses on quantitative research serving a variety of corporate and non-profit clients. Quest Analysis provides market research with a passion. For more information visit www.questanalysis.com.

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