



agency TYPES

The provincial development and funding agencies participated in the Telefilm-managed Canada Pavilion, except for Quebec's SODEC, which ran its own separate installation nearby.



Ann MacKenzie, CEO of
Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation
Photo credit: Maurie Alioff

WHEN I MET with Ann MacKenzie, CEO of Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation, she gave the Canada Pavilion an unequivocal thumbs-up. Until last year, Nova Scotia showed up at Cannes on its own, and “we weren’t even a blip on the radar screen. Even Canada is small, so pooling our resources like this to promote ourselves gives us a much larger presence.” MacKenzie, like all the agency chiefs, turned over part of her festival day to working the pavilion’s entrance booth. As for the meetings on her busy agenda, they were mostly with “potential co-production partners. We don’t do a lot of location promotion here; it’s not really the venue.” MacKenzie would like to see Nova Scotia emphasize indigenous production and when it comes to annual volume, “get over that \$200-million mark.”

At Cannes 2003, Ray Wilson, executive director of New Brunswick Film, met producers from around the world, following up on encounters from other markets. The industry runs on face time, and good relationships sometimes end in deals. “I’m very confident,” said Wilson, “there will be one project that will result from Cannes and go into production next year.” In existence for only five years, New Brunswick

Film has nudged the province’s numbers to \$35 million annually. “The growth is substantial,” Wilson continued, and “there is still lots of opportunity.”

Michel Frappier, CEO of the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) for a little over a year, saw Cannes as an opportunity to meet the various country bodies that are in the same business and perhaps pick up some new ideas for programs. Looking into the OMDC’s future, Frappier projected a much more market-driven agency that encourages staff to think like private-sector entrepreneurs. “We approach projects with the point of view that everything is possible, then we adjust to the reality.” The agency, its CEO continued, should become knowledge-based and consult its own data when it comes to measured decisions. In late June, the OMDC announced a public/private partnership with a new organism called the Ontario Film and Television Consortium. The joint venture will confront the problems facing Ontario, while promoting the industry’s merits.

The umbrella group, Canada West, encompasses SaskFilm, Alberta Film, British Columbia Film, and Manitoba Film and Sound. For Carole Vivier, CEO of Manitoba’s agency, the pavilion symbolizes the partnership she thinks is crucial to the development of the Canadian industry. It “brands Canada to the world, and then within that promotes Manitoba.” At the festival, she was happy to see “networking among the agencies and associations, looking at issues across the country facing us and our filmmakers so that they have a collective voice.” In May, Manitoba’s industry was approaching a volume of \$70 million annually. As for what lies ahead, “Our focus is on the independent scene, as well as marketing to offshore.”

Rob Egan, president of British Columbia Film, sees the festival and its market as a chance for producers “to be energized, and to understand what they have to do to compete.” When Egan hooked up with producers who want to shoot in Canada, he didn’t always pitch British Columbia, and in some cases steered them toward other provinces. “I think that we’re trying to work co-operatively to assist all Canadian producers to have better relationships with those from other countries.” During Cannes, British Columbia’s numbers for 2002 were released, and total production had dropped slightly below \$1 billion with “a fairly significant drop on the domestic side,” Regan said. British Columbia Film’s financial resources are limited, so it can’t really do more than strategize carefully about allocation choices, and place an emphasis on developing filmmakers good enough to compete. As for the new Telefilm policy Richard Stursberg is advocating, Egan told me, “I don’t disagree with the goal. We all want to see larger audiences for Canadian films, and we certainly want to see companies that have the capacity to be self-financing, and to grow and become less dependent on the federal and provincial funding programs that are available. And that’s an objective that we all need to be working toward.”

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