

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 29th, 2021

Local filmmaker looks to make waves with ‘Rising Tides’

Sheboygan County, WI – The Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-Green Bay aspire to offer a wide array of services, resources and expertise designed to help promote entrepreneurial opportunities in Sheboygan County, including the community spirit and business diversity expressed through the creative medium of local film and video production.

With an assist from the SCEDC and SBDC entrepreneurial services, Belladonna Film Project’s Writer-Director Beah Travis is set to debut the ‘Rising Tides’ virtual event. “‘Rising Tides’ is a virtual event that will feature new women-owned businesses in the Sheboygan area,” Belladonna Film Project’s Writer-Director Beah Travis said. “Specifically, these are smaller businesses that did not get a full two years under their belt before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.” The event will include short film segments on the different businesses and the women behind them, a live question-and-answer session, where viewers will have the chance to submit questions for the business owners, and a live panel discussion, which will feature women leading social change movements in Sheboygan County.

The free ‘Rising Tides’ event will take place virtually on Thursday, May 20 from 7-9 p.m. Registration to receive the event link can be made by visiting www.belladonnathefilm.com/events/rising-tides. “All of the business and businesses owners featured in ‘Rising Tides’ are from Sheboygan County,” Travis said. “We have 18 confirmed businesses. The businesses include everything from artisanal shops to fitness studios to food spots...and more.”

The Belladonna Film Project has been an ongoing labor of creative love for Travis, which will kick into high gear under the spotlight of the upcoming ‘Rising Tides’.

The Belladonna Film Project is an arts initiative in Sheboygan County that is looking to bring a feature film production to the area and provide arts opportunities for local students through the production of the film. “The feature film ‘Belladonna’ is a coming-of-old-age drama set in Sheboygan about an 80-year-old, Midwestern woman who is reckoning with the meaning of her life after her husband passes away,” Travis said. “We are currently working to raise the funds to make ‘Belladonna,’ and in the meantime, the Belladonna Film Project is producing other film projects like ‘Rising Tides.’ Belladonna Film Project will present about the feature film, ‘Belladonna,’ at ‘Rising Tides.’”

According to Travis, the future release of “Belladonna” is highly dependent on the ability to raise the necessary funds to complete filming and production of the film.

“Production and release of ‘Belladonna’ is contingent on funding,” Travis said. “We are currently looking for donations and investments to raise the budget for the film. Anticipated production is May 2022. Once

the film is complete, we will submit the film to festivals both nationally and internationally. We will also look into options for distribution. The Sheboygan premiere of 'Belladonna' will take place at the Stefanie H. Weill Center in Sheboygan on a date to be determined."

After building a successful career as a New York-based television producer, Travis stepped out of her comfort zone to pursue her goal of releasing a feature film set in her hometown.

"I grew up in Plymouth and went to UW-Madison for my undergraduate," Travis said. "I spent the final year of my studies in Prague studying Czech filmmaking. After graduating, I moved to New York City and started working as the background casting coordinator for the Emmy-award-winning true crime series 'A Crime to Remember.' I spent four seasons with the show as an associate producer, story producer and writer. I also worked on independent films as a second assistant director."

"In January of 2017, I participated in an artist residency in Morocco, and during that time, I realized that I wanted to step away from what I was doing in New York and pursue making a feature film set in my hometown," she said. "In the fall of 2017, I started writing the screenplay for 'Belladonna' and in October 2019, I began meeting with different Sheboygan area organizations to pitch the film and create partnerships through the project. 'Belladonna' expanded into the Belladonna Film Project as we started to produce smaller film projects while continuing to plan for the feature film. The smaller projects include a short film called 'Dead of Winter,' which we shot this past February in Plymouth and 'Rising Tides,' which will premiere on May 20. My directorial debut, the 2020 short film, 'Way Upstate,' will premiere at the Wisconsin Film Festival this May."

Travis credits Hannah Kaiser for her efforts in collaborating on the 'Rising Tides' project. "Hannah Kaiser is my co-collaborator for 'Rising Tides,'" Travis said. "Hannah grew up in Plymouth and is a marketing professional in Sheboygan with an established background in project management and event planning. She has planned community events with Siebkens and 3 Sheeps and now brings her expertise and passion for community to the Belladonna Film Project."

Despite the extra challenges of funding a local film project during the COVID-19 pandemic, Travis is highly determined to transform her dream into a reality. "Our goal with 'Rising Tides' is to highlight new creative ventures taking place in Sheboygan and the women behind them," Travis said. "After a year of closed doors, we hope it will be an exciting opportunity to foster community and give people an idea of what cool new things are happening around Sheboygan."

"Our goal with the Belladonna Film Project is to produce a feature film, 'Belladonna,' that centers the story of an aging woman, specifically a woman from the 'Silent Generation,'" she said. "We aim to produce this film in Sheboygan County and to provide a unique arts experience for local students and community members through the production of the film."

More information on how to support the feature film 'Belladonna' through donation, investment, or corporate sponsorship can be found at www.belladonnathefilm.com/support.

For more information about SCEDC entrepreneurial services, email York@SheboyganCountyEDC.com or call 920-452-2479.

##

Attachment: Beah Jpg, Belladonna Png, Rising Tides Jpg, SCEDC logo, SBDC WI logo

The Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) is a countywide private/public partnership, leading economic development efforts to improve the economic wellbeing and long-term prosperity of the businesses, residents and communities of Sheboygan County, through collaborative retention, expansion and attraction efforts for business and employment development. The SCEDC leverages a variety of tools available to encourage business growth and job creation. Key performance indicators tapped by SCEDC track and measure businesses assisted and resources leveraged. By applying many tools to assist businesses and communities and help them succeed, SCEDC achieves increased economic prosperity for Sheboygan County.

