

Port St. Lucie documentary endeavor 'beyond rare'

By Cathy Reeder

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PORT ST. LUCIE — A documentary premiering April 27 about the city's 50 years of existence isn't a short compilation of home movies.

"City of Dreams" is a full-length professional documentary that already has its own listing on IMBd.com, the Internet Movie database, an authoritative film reference source. It is listed as a documentary/biography /drama/family film.

Its storyline, provided by the movie's PR crew, sounds intriguing: "The story of one of the most unlikely cities in the United States and the people that drove the dream in spite of many odds."

In 2007, the City Council tasked the Port St. Historical Society with researching the city's history and making a 60-minute movie and book for the 50th Anniversary Celebration.

The length grew to 92 minutes as the historical society researched city history.

"There was just too much we needed to include in order to adequately, and I mean just adequately, tell our story," said Richard McAfoos, president of the historical society and the movie's executive producer.

A full-length dramatic documentary of city history is "beyond rare," McAfoos said. The crew working on "City of Dreams" found that most cities just have short marketing videos geared to lure tourists or new businesses.

The society was surprised to find the talent needed to produce the movie right in town, McAfoos said.

The society hired the Treasure Coast Film Company and director Jose H. Garofalo for \$80,000, about a tenth of market price, McAfoos said.

The City provided \$50,000, St. Lucie County provided \$20,000, and Digital Domain Media Group, Martin Memorial Health Systems, and nine other private companies in the area provided the rest of the funding for the film.

Everyone else working on the production donated their time and services, McAfoos said.

It was Garofalo's job to turn the city's history into compelling drama. He used re-enactments with between 250 and 300 local actors, interviews with key local people, and stories of longtime families and businesses to show how they grew with the city.

McAfoos said what's shown in the movie was meticulously documented.

"We are very dedicated to the accuracy of the history, and to ensure that the truth overrides the myth of the misinformation," he said. "That was our endeavor in the movie, and in the book."

That of course made the filmmaking process challenging.

"It's one thing telling a fiction story, another thing is telling the history of a unique (city) like this — the ups and downs, challenges and ultimate solutions," said Garofalo, 51. "It's amazing the journey the city has taken in only 50 years. You can't help but be inspired."

MOVIE CREW

Director/co-writer: Jose H. Garofalo, also directed and co-wrote "Sacred Waters" with Andy Garcia, Gloria Estefan and Stephen Bauer about Cubans who fled to Miami for a new life; directed and co-wrote documentary on Zora Neale Hurston, "That's Livin'."

Executive Director: Richard McAfoos

Co-writer: Yusif Usin

Production company: Treasure Coast Films

Staff write Christin Erazo contributed to this report.



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HOW TO SEE & BUY THE MOVIE

Movie premiere: Wednesday, April 27, 7 p.m.

Where: Port St. Lucie Civic Center, 9221 Civic Center Lane, preceded by a sock hop 6 – 7 p.m.

Tickets: \$5 each, with 2,000 available on first-come, first-served basis at Civic Center box office.

DVD sales: A \$15 DVD featuring the full-length movie, the music video with Alana Ferraro, and an instrumental version will be on sale in the Civic Center lobby after the premiere. The DVD will be on sale in a kiosk, along with a book on the history of Port St. Lucie at the City's 50th Anniversary Celebrations the rest of the week. See event schedule. The Shell Bazaar will have the DVD of the movie/music videos for sale on an ongoing basis after the week's celebrations.