



NEWS RELEASE
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Cucalorus Connect Brings the Art of Entrepreneurship and Tech to Film Festival

***Partnering with UNCW, Organizers Build on Success
of the CIE's 2014 Coastal Connect Conference***

***Expanded Film Festival schedule to celebrate
Wilmington's incubator and tech start-up vibe***

Cucalorus Film Festival and Connect Conference to run November 10 - 15

Wilmington, NC, July 30, 2015 – Cucalorus Film Festival will expand its focus beyond the creative, provocative and culturally relevant film for which it's known, to include programming that celebrates the creativity in technical innovation and entrepreneurship taking root in Wilmington. Cucalorus Connect, a business conference and showcase, will present Wilmington as a business start-up destination where ideas and enterprises are successfully merging with capital and commerce. Following the example of South By Southwest (Austin), the Tom Tom Festival (Charlottesville, VA) and similar events around the world, Cucalorus Connect will begin on Tuesday, November 10, with an evening kickoff and VIP Sponsor party announcing this year's 10x10 entrepreneur/filmmaker pairings for short films to be produced over the following five days. The conference continues on Wednesday, November 11, with a full day of panel discussions, workshops, speakers and meet-ups. Additional sessions and events will be scheduled Thursday through Sunday, concurrent with the film festival. The Cucalorus Connect wrap party on Sunday, November 15, will feature the finished short films from the 10x10 pairings among other Connect-centric events. The Cucalorus Film Festival and Connect Conference will take place at venues, both existing and pop-up, throughout historic downtown Wilmington and at sites central to Wilmington's start-up economy.

Merging ILM's Budding Entrepreneur Scene with its Established Film Festival

With the rapid and recent success of local start-ups, Wilmington is emerging as a center for new ventures, business incubators, entrepreneurs, and tech innovators. Cucalorus Executive Director Dan Brawley offers that merging this entrepreneurial energy with that of the 21-year-old film festival is a natural progression. "The computer programmers, the biomedical engineers, these are the artists, the creators for the 21st Century. They are discovering new solutions, new media and new perspectives for the world we live in," he says. "Cucalorus is a natural platform to celebrate and cultivate this creative energy."

Partnering with UNCW's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, TekMountain and Others

Cucalorus Connect was inspired by last year's successful Coastal Connect conference held by UNCW's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). In tapping the Cucalorus Film Festival's national and international reputation as a venue celebrating creativity and social relevance, the CIE looks to further develop Wilmington's stature as a creative marketplace for high-growth and high-impact companies.

"We are so excited to partner with Cucalorus on this conference to provide an opportunity for people to, well, connect! Innovating, creating, and driving new business development in Wilmington is a common goal of the CIE and Cucalorus, so combining university resources with the strength of the Cucalorus brand can only expand upon the great things already going on in Wilmington." Laura Brogdon Primavera, Manager of Programs and Operations

Last year's inaugural 10x10 challenge provided an opportunity for Cucalorus and the filmmaking community to collaborate with UNCW's CIE and Castle Branch Corps.'s TekMountain. Sean Ahlum, director of business development for TekMountain, offered that "Last year's partnership proved a healthy fusing of creative minds with filmmakers, innovators and entrepreneurs ultimately showcasing the overall creative, entrepreneurial vibe of the Cape Fear Region."

Mr. Ahlum and Dean of UNCW's Graduate School Ron Vetter are among those working to bring Cucalorus Connect together. Others involved in the planning are Laura Brogdon, with UNCW CIE; Scott Czechlewski with the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce and its Cape Fear Future initiative; Ed Wolverton with Wilmington Downtown, Inc.; Liz Marion with Elite Innovations, Wilmington's maker-space; Doug Tarble and David Hardin with Cape Fear Community College and its Small Business Center; Dylan Lee with the City of Wilmington; Ann Revell-Pechar, with Cloudwyze; and Keith Rhodes, renowned local chef. Wilmington public relations consultant Margee Herring will serve as the coordinator for Cucalorus Connect.

Ideas on tap for Cucalorus Connect

Connect workgroup meetings are underway developing recommendations for panels, events, speakers, workshops and parties. Among those taking shape are events focusing on venture capital, placemaking, gaming and virtual reality, brewing and distilling, wearable technology, crowdfunding, movement building, and e-learning. An early September deadline is anticipated for the final selection of panels and events. Anyone interested in submitting an idea for consideration may contact Margee Herring at connect@cucalorus.org. Panel applications can be completed at cucalorus.org/connect.asp.

About Cucalorus:

Cucalorus was founded in 1994 by the underground filmmaking collective Twinkle Doon. Today, Cucalorus is a multi-disciplinary arts organization supporting emerging and innovative creative professionals through an annual film festival, a residency program, a micro-cinema, a summer outdoor screening series, and an extensive community engagement program. The annual festival takes place every November, celebrating independent and international film for five days in historic downtown Wilmington, NC. MovieMaker Magazine recently recognized it as "One of the Coolest Film Festivals in the World, 2014." More than 200 films screen each year at venues all over downtown Wilmington, attracting a large number of participating artists (300+) and thousands of fans and industry professionals (accumulated attendance in 2014 was 15,743). Cucalorus is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that relies on funds from individuals, businesses, and grants to fund its annual celebration. For more information on the Cucalorus Film Festival visit www.cucalorus.org.

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