



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

## **Governor Richardson Announces Four Winners of the 2006 Governor's Cup Short Screenplay Competition**

*Four winning screenplays to be produced in New Mexico in June*

For Immediate Release  
May 9, 2006

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SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today announced the four winners of the 2006 Governor's Cup Short Screenplay Competition: Rick Romancito of Taos; Scott and Paula Merrow of Albuquerque; David Valdez and Philip Gunn of Rio Rancho; and Hannah Macpherson of Albuquerque.

"These writers represent some of the best of our homegrown talent," stated Governor Bill Richardson. "There is a broad base of creative writers in New Mexico, and I'm pleased to be able to support and nurture their work."

Funded by Comcast, the nation's leading provider of cable, entertainment and communications products and services, and the National Geographic All Roads Film Project, each winner will receive a \$5,000 budget toward the creation of their film, plus use of the state's production equipment, and trainees from the Film Technicians Training Programs in Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The winners will also receive free tuition to the Screenwriting Conference in Santa Fe May 31-June 4, and a copy of Jungle Software's new Gorilla Pro software, which helps filmmakers with budgeting, scheduling, and accounting.

Over 400 entries were received for the competition, from Farmington to Lovington, Raton to Chapparral.

“We are delighted by the response from the writing community,” stated Lisa Strout, Director of the New Mexico Film Office. “We received hundreds of inventive scripts and I wish we could make every single one.”

Eric Witt, Director of Legislative/Political Affairs & Media Industries Development Initiative for Governor Bill Richardson, noted that winners of the first competition in 2005 have already gone on to larger careers. “Bringing the work of New Mexicans to light simply breeds more success,” he stated. “Providing indigenous talent with the recognition and support they need is a top priority.”

“Comcast is pleased to support the Governor’s Cup competition again this year. We are proud to be a part of this competition which provides an opportunity for aspiring talent in New Mexico to showcase their work,” said Bill Kent, Southwest Area Vice President for Comcast.

Animator Jeff Drew, winner of the inaugural Governor’s Cup for his short film “Allison”, has since joined Laika Entertainment, the animation production house owned by former Nike CEO Phil Knight. Jeff has crafted commercial spots, sequences for features, and widely circulated short films for Laika -- including the multiple award-winning “Walk”, which received acclaim both at Sundance and on the animation festival circuit.

Chris Kientz of Las Cruces, since winning second place in last year’s competition, has taken his 22-minute animated short “Raven Tales” and created a full 26-episode television series that is now licensed for broadcast in nine different countries. It is currently the only animated TV show made in New Mexico, and has won over 20 awards worldwide.

For the 2006 competition, entries were evaluated by industry professionals. Finalists met personally with the selection panel to pitch their scripts, after receiving guidance from a professional advisor.

The winners in the Comcast category, which will be produced throughout the state next month, are the following:

“**Dearth**”, the story of a young girl’s impact on a dying man. Writer **Hanna Macpherson**, 24, is a third-generation New Mexican from Albuquerque. Hannah graduated from Highland High School in 1999. Hannah has two short films to her credit, one of which received an Honorable Mention from the Rochester International Film Festival in New York and screened at Taos Talking Picture Festival. She is currently working as a field producer on a network reality show. “Dearth” will be shot with the assistance of the Governor’s Film Technicians Training Program at Eastern New Mexico University in Roswell.

“**A Day In Heaven**” is the story of a widower who builds a machine so he can visit his wife in heaven. Writers **David Valdez and Philip Gunn**, both 28, have been working together since childhood. The duo recently formed their New Mexico-based production

company (I Can't Believe It's Not Hollywood! Entertainment LLC) and intend to shoot their first feature in the Albuquerque area in the near future. "A Day In Heaven" will be created with the expertise of the Creative Media Institute and the Governor's Film Technicians Training Program at NMSU, both in Las Cruces.

**"A Piece of Pie"** is a comedy set in Pie Town, NM. Writers **Scott and Paula Merrow**, 55 and 54, were high school and college sweethearts before separating for over 30 years and then reuniting in early 2005. Scott is a retired Air Force Colonel; Paula retired last year from a 22-year career in Medical Speech-Language Pathology. "A Piece of Pie" will be created with the help of the Governor's Film Technicians Training Program at TVI in Albuquerque.

The winner in the National Geographic category is the following:

**"Benito's Gift"**, a family story set in Taos Pueblo, is the winner in the National Geographic All Roads category. Writer **Rick Romancito**, 52, who is full blood Pueblo Indian (half Taos and half Zuni). He is the editor of Tempo, the arts and entertainment magazine of The Taos News. Romancito first began making films using Super-8 film equipment from Albuquerque's Model Cities Program in the early 1970s. "Benito's Gift" will be produced with the assistance of the Governor's Film Technicians Training Program at the Santa Fe Community College.

The All Roads Project is a forum for indigenous and minority-culture storytellers to bring their lives, experiences, and cultures to new audiences. "We're excited to work with Rick Romancito for the All Roads category of the Governor's Cup," stated Francene Blythe. "His project fits perfectly into our mission of supporting through funding indigenous stories told in first person voices."

#### **About Comcast:**

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA, CMCSK) (<http://www.comcast.com>) is the nation's leading provider of cable, entertainment and communications products and services. With 21.5 million cable customers, more than 9 million high-speed Internet customers, and 1.5 million voice customers, Comcast is principally involved in the development, management and operation of broadband cable systems and in the delivery of programming content.

Comcast employs more than 550 people in New Mexico, including Comcast Spotlight employees, and serves more than 225,000 customers statewide.