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NEWS RELEASE

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Water Rocks! videos earn Iowa Motion Picture Association awards

AMES, IA— The Water Rocks! team came home with 15 awards at the 23rd Annual Iowa Motion Picture Association (IMPA) award ceremony, held on March 29 in Burlington, Iowa.

Water Rocks! is a statewide youth education campaign to bring awareness about water and why it rocks. The Water Rocks! team has produced numerous music videos, public service announcements and several documentaries that explore all aspects of water resources, including chemistry, contaminants, conservation practices, watersheds and more.

At the IMPA ceremony, three of the Water Rocks! videos earned Awards of Excellence in Educational Production: “Will U B the H 2 My O?”, “I Am An Iowan” series and the “What’s In Your Water?” series. Also earning Awards of Excellence are “Cover Crop Anthem” for Original Music and “Isle of Plastic” for Computer Generated Visual Effects. “Incredible Wetlands” earned an Award of Achievement for Documentary.

Water Rocks! campaign director Jacqueline Comito wears several hats when creating videos. She is the visionary, talent scout, lyricist, and producer as well as a vocalist on the music videos. The entertaining, humorous and effective videos run the gamut of visual style including computer-generated animation, live actors and a mixture of both.

“The key to any good creative work is to surround yourself with really talented people,” says Comito. “I welcome what each person brings to the table. Different videographers have different approaches.” For example, in several of the “What’s In Your Water?” videos, Comito presented video producer Andrew Bentler with only a concept. “All we gave Andrew was the idea that we wanted a series of videos that use rubber ducks to explain a handful of water quality issues and he ran with it. We then collaborated on the scripts to make certain they were scientifically accurate.”

Water Rocks! science director Ann Staudt is an environmental engineer, pianist and composer. She works with Jewell resident Todd Stevens to create the songs. Staudt composed the song “Will U B the H₂ My O?” which won an Award of Achievement for Original Music.

“I wanted the song to have a modern, pop feel that would appeal today’s youth. The musical style contrasts with the retro costuming to create visual interest,” says Staudt. Her love of chemistry was where the idea emerged. “At the heart of chemistry is the study of how atoms interact and react with one another. When put in the context of the life of a high school student’s interactions, this strange juxtaposition emerged.” The video also won an Award of Achievement for Direction, which was done by digital artist Josh LaVille. He is an Iowa State University graduate and Oregon resident.

The film “Incredible Wetlands” was written and directed by Comito. It was filmed in Iowa entirely and features several Iowans talking about their experiences and interactions with wetlands. Staudt composed the music and plays piano on the video.

“Most of our inspiration comes from time spent outside in Iowa,” comments Comito. “Wetlands are incredible places of beauty and life. I was compelled to make this video in order to help people appreciate their ecological importance.”

Visit the website to learn more and to watch the videos: www.waterrocks.org. Follow Water Rocks! on Facebook and Instagram.

Partners of Water Rocks! are Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA Section 319), Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Water Center and Iowa Learning Farms.

List of videos and awards:

Will U B the H 2 My O? Music Video

Award of Excellence in Educational Production

Award of Achievement for Original Music

Award of Achievement for Direction

Cover Crop Anthem Music Video

Award of Excellence in Original Music

Award of Achievement for Computer Generated Visual Effects

Isle of Plastic Music Video

Award of Excellence for Computer Generated Visual Effects

“What’s In Your Water?” Series (12 videos)

Full Series – Award of Achievement in Educational Production

The Shower – Awards of Excellence for Editing and PSA

The Walk— Award of Achievement for Visual Effects

The Walk (30 sec) – Award of Achievement for Commercial Under \$5,000

The Movie – Award of Achievement for Direction

Tubing – Award of Achievement for PSA

“I Am An Iowan” Series (5 videos)

Award of Achievement for Educational Production

Incredible Wetlands

Award of Achievement for Documentary