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“9500 LIBERTY” MAKES WORLD PREMIERE AND STIRS DEBATE AT 4TH ANNUAL CHARLOTE FILM FESTIVAL

For Immediate Release - - Charlotte, N.C., 09.23.09 – “9500 Liberty” makes its world premiere in Charlotte this weekend -- a fitting location given North Carolina’s own struggles with America’s explosive battle over immigration.

The film unfolds in a small Virginia town that shares many historic links and parallels to North Carolina, including rapid population growth and demographic shifts in recent years.

In July of 2007, Prince William County, Va., became “ground zero” in a battle over immigration policy when elected officials adopted a law requiring police officers to question anyone they thought was “probably” un-documented. “9500 Liberty” reveals the startling vulnerability of a local government targeted by national anti-immigration networks using the Internet to frighten and intimidate lawmakers and citizens. Alarmed by a climate of fear and racial division, residents form a resistance effort using YouTube videos and virtual town-hall meetings. The ferocious fight to adopt and then reverse the policy unfolds inside government chambers, on the streets and on the Internet.

Filmmakers Annabel Park and Eric Byler began posting short video clips on a You Tube channel they created called “9500 Liberty.” The project took the name from a street address in Old Town Manassas where a sign had been posted reading: “Prince William Co. Stop Your Racism to Hispanics!” The sign was in protest of the new county policy that requires police to check the immigration status of suspected “illegals” during routine traffic stops and denies some services to undocumented immigrants.

Byler told the Charlotte Film Festival that one of the best and most important lessons from what happened in Prince William County is that Republicans and Democrats achieve the best results when they work together.

“The Board of Supervisors in Prince William County has six Republicans and two Democrats. Thus, once the election was over and it was time to focus on policy implementation, it was incumbent upon the four moderate Republicans on the board, with the aid of the two Democrats, to find a way to repeal the Probable Cause mandate,” Byler said.

Elected officials are being invited to the screening Sunday at 3:30 p.m. in hopes of generating community debate about the similar issues in Charlotte and across North Carolina.

Meanwhile Byler and Park will appear on a segment of the WFAE’s Mike Collins Show Wed., Sept. 23 beginning at 9 a.m. The station’s news department will also air a piece on Thursday, Sept. 24. For more information about the film go to www.9500Liberty.com.

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