



Meet Eric Hollenbeck, Board Chair of the Finger Lakes Film Society and Seneca Film Festival...

1. Describe Your Business:

The Finger Lakes Film Society is a New York State 501 c3 nonprofit that was organized to promote artistically and culturally significant arts through education and exhibition to enrich the lives of people in the Finger Lakes region. The society's mission is primarily achieved through the Seneca Film Festival. The Seneca Film Festival is a unique celebration of what the region has to offer, including film, craft beverages, and the outdoors. It is an interactive experience. There will be a lot of filmmakers who come into the area for the event.

Attendees will get to see new independent films from all over the world. "This year we had over one hundred submissions, and twenty countries were represented," Eric said.

2. Tell us your story:

Eric is originally from Horseheads, NY. He moved back to the region about a year and a half ago after being gone for sixteen years. "I spent those years traveling all over the country working on movies, TV shows and commercials," Eric said. "I moved back because I missed the Finger Lakes community. My family has a cottage on Seneca Lake, so Seneca and Watkins Glen have always been special to me. Every time I came home I saw such potential here, and really wanted to be part of it and the community."

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

"I think really just jumping in and adapting in any situation," Eric said. "Also listening, and being able to pivot or evolve. Remaining cool, calm, and confident going into most endeavors, and not being afraid to fail. A lot of people talk about doing things, but I'm more about executing on those visions and going after it. You can plan and plan and plan, but if you never execute it doesn't matter. You have to take on the risk, and sometimes it is okay to stumble along the way."

4. What inspires you?

"Really what inspires me is the region itself," Eric said. "We are so rich in community assets and have so many talented and creative people doing such amazing things in the region. The World is noticing. How does that not inspire you? The more I meet everyone, the more inspired and energetic I get about the potential and future of our region. We have an international brand here."

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

"What keeps me up is the diversity of offerings in the area," Eric said. "In order to attract more year-round industries, it will take diversification. If we think about the area as being a seasonal business climate we are never going to get there. That's scary considering we operate all year with multiple businesses. I want to see the community thrive and reach that potential. I think it's happening, with the DRI, grants, and the private investments. We just have to run to get there, which right now means organizing and planning to have it happen in 2-5 years. It's not just going happen overnight, we have to work for it."

6. What is your favorite local activity?

"I think there are multiple favorite local activities," Eric said. "We like to patron a lot of restaurants and craft beverage producers. We also enjoy going to watch live music, spending time at the lake, hiking the state park, and grilling out with friends."

7. Is there anything else we should know about you?

"We have put in a lot of time, energy, and resources into the Seneca Film Festival. We encourage you to check it out and join us on what could be the next big event for the region. We are celebrating all of you beyond just screening Independent films. We will also be releasing the film lineup, special events and VIP guests soon. Stay tuned on our social media pages, webpage (senecafilmfest.org) and tickets are available on Eventbrite.com