



TOMMY HAINES

Award-winning moviemaker Neil Mandt screens *Last Stop for Paul* at the 2007 Hardacre Film & Cinema Festival.

# Hardacre Film Festival

## Easygoing at the Hardacre Film & Cinema Festival

**Y**OU'VE SEEN THOSE MOVIES set in quaint towns where everyone knows their neighbors. Yearly traditions in these places are the result of hardworking, dedicated townspeople looking to grow the local economy. Well, how about becoming a part of one of these towns for real? It's a pipe dream for many, but for those who visit Tipton, Iowa during the Hardacre Film & Cinema Festival, it's one that is hard to ignore. During the town's "Ridiculous Days," visitors and citizens walk the sidewalks looking for sales, stopping to catch some live music and sitting in on some of

Hardacre's annual traditions.

"I love small-town film festivals. They tend to be much more interesting and eclectic in their choices, and they tend to have extremely engaged audiences, which was very much the case at Hardacre," says Eric Scholl, director of *It's In The Blood*.

"In a way," explains festival director Travis Alden, "rural areas can be somewhat insulated from the type of quality, cutting-edge independent filmmaking that we're trying to bring to the Hardacre. Film lovers in large metro areas and along the coasts can access truly independent films in a number of different venues, but where do you go to see that in a county of only 18,000 people? That's why the Hardacre attracts the audience it does—a very film-savvy, engaged one that values what we're trying to do and appreciates having an opportunity to see these films."

For *Last Stop for Paul* director Neil Mandt, this was hardly the last stop on a tour of more than 60 festivals. However, there was no way this small town and festival couldn't be on his radar. "*Last Stop for Paul* has won awards at more than half" of the festivals it has played, states Mandt. "All of those fests were in metropolitan areas. I was very interested in Hardacre because it represented real small-town life—it is literally a one-traffic-light town. It was a unique opportunity to have the movie screened by an audience in the middle of America."

This year's festival took place August 3-4, 2007 after a one-year hiatus. Actually, "this festival was cancelled in 2006, due to burnout of the organizing committee," admits Alden. But thanks to the townspeople at the Tipton Chamber of Commerce, the tradition was brought back in 2007 for its 10th year, trumping its previous submissions record with more than three times the entries.

Visit [www.hardacrefilmfestival.com](http://www.hardacrefilmfestival.com) for updates. —Mallory Potosky