

Mentone's Giant Egg Appears In 'World's Largest' At Film Festival

BY DAVID SLONE
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When the documentary "World's Largest" premieres at the South by Southwest Film Festival March 12-20 in Austin, Texas, the town of Mentone will get a little notoriety with it.

"World's Largest" features towns across the country with giant roadside attractions. The giant Egg that sits in downtown Mentone is one of the 60 roadside attractions that made the cut.

During a telephone interview Thursday afternoon, co-director Amy Elliott said the filming in Mentone took place during the Mentone Egg Festival in either 2004 or 2005. Elliott shot the film with Elizabeth Donius.

"We've been working on this film for six years," she said.

Filming for the documentary took place at about 75 places across the country, Elliott said. They were only able to get 60 places into the 75-minute film.

Before filming started, Elliott said they did a lot of pre-production work. They did their research and looked at photographs of potential places to incorporate into the documentary. Some sites in the film are only briefly mentioned.

Throughout the documentary, the town of Soap Lake, Wash., is profiled as the town struggles to build the world's largest lava lamp. Elliott said they followed Soap Lake's story for four years. The other towns with "world's largest" items are profiled to see how towns funded

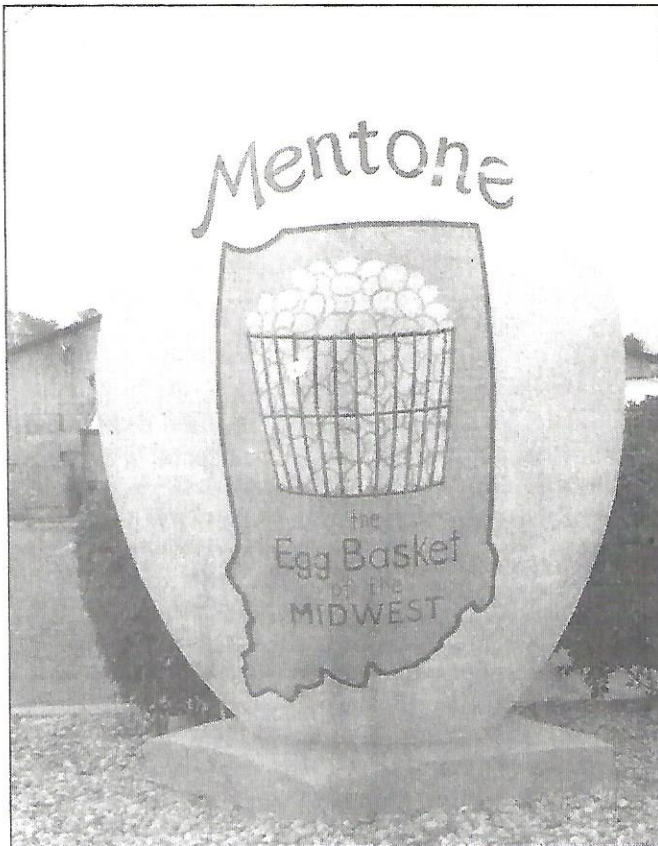


Photo by Daniel Riordan, Times-Union

The giant Mentone egg is featured in a documentary about the 'World's Largest'.

end. Elliott said while it's difficult to determine which town has the bigger egg, she would guess that Winlock's egg was bigger.

"Neither town seemed to realize there was another egg," said Elliott. The town of Winlock was amazed there was another egg in Indiana.

During their filming in Mentone, Elliott said, they interviewed a lot of people especially people in the egg industry in Mentone.

Two Mentone residents who survived the film editing process and made the movie are Frank and Jim Manwaring. Elliott said the two brothers are active in the egg industry.

Like Mentone, towns across the country have the "world's largest" something to commemorate the

narrowing down part was definitely the hardest."

Deciding on which of the "world's largest" to include, Elliott said they had a list of criteria. The object could not be an advertising symbol. It had to be civic minded, and a reflection of the geographic, economic and cultural history of the placé. The largest object also had to be aesthetically pleasing.

Making the South by Southwest Film Festival is not a small feat.

"It's kind of a big deal," Elliott said. "It's one of the most exciting film festivals around."

She said the film festival is a good fit for the film premiere of "World's Largest". The movie will be shown in the Emerging Visions Category.

networking opportunities and immersion into the art and business of the rapidly evolving world of independent film."

After the South by Southwest Film Festival, Elliott said they plan to take the documentary to other film festivals. Ultimately, she said, they would love to take the film to the local communities where it was filmed and show it. However, that is a long way down the road.

The movie will not only appeal to those interested in roadside attractions, but also to anyone interested in small-town America. Small-town industry is undergoing some drastic changes and those changes are affecting small-town life, she said. The film captures that moment in time when small towns are trying to find ways to survive.

"It's also really neat to see what every geographic area has contributed to the country," Elliott said.

Elliott and Donius have worked together before, having done a lot of work together on the Independent Film Channel's "Split Screen." They've been friends since middle school. But "World's Largest" is their first feature documentary.

Elliott's work has appeared in countless publications, including "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post". Donius is the former executive director of the IFP/Chicago and also worked for the PBS documentary showcase "POV".

"It's good to finally have something to show to people. It's been a labor of love," said Elliott of

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During filming, Elliott said they discovered that Mentone isn't the only town with the "world's largest egg." The town of Winlock, Wash., also has the "world's largest egg". Winlock's egg is on a stick on its side, while Mentone's egg is on its



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Like Mentone, towns across the country have the "world's largest" something to commemorate the industry in their area. Some towns have events centered around their industry, such as the Mentone Egg Festival.

"People often ask me if I had trouble finding things to cover. I would say no, the opposite is true. There's lots to try and cover," Elliott said. "The

narrowing down part was definitely the hardest."

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According to a press release, The South by Southwest Film Festival is a "uniquely creative environment featuring the dynamic convergence of talent, smart audiences and industry heavyweights. A hotbed of discovery and interactivity, the event offers lucrative

ing small-town life, she said. The film captures that moment in time when small towns are trying to find ways to survive.

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"It's good to finally have something to show to people. It's been a labor of love," said Elliott of "World's Largest."

"It sure was fun to make."

For more information, visit online at:

"World's Largest", www.worldslargestdoc.com

South by Southwest Film Festival, www.sxsw.com/film

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