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SCARECROW VIDEO SECURES ITS LONGTIME HOME AS PERMANENT ANCHOR FOR LEGENDARY COLLECTION

Seattle, WA (January 26, 2026) - Scarecrow Video, the iconic Pacific Northwest-based nonprofit and home to the world's largest publicly-accessible physical media collection, has purchased its longtime home in the University District, marking a transformative turning point for the organization and the city's creative ecosystem.

The purchase comes at a pivotal moment for arts and culture organizations across the country, many of which face mounting financial pressures, rising rents and increasing risk of displacement. In an era when cultural spaces are routinely priced out of the cities they helped to define, Scarecrow's acquisition represents long-term stability and renewed possibility.

Seattle's creative economy has long punched above its weight nationally, fueling innovation, storytelling and cultural exchange. Yet even in a city celebrated for creativity, independent arts institutions continue to face extraordinary challenges. Nationwide shifts in philanthropy, real estate costs and audience behavior—combined with seismic changes in the film and media industries—have placed beloved community institutions at risk. Scarecrow's longtime neighborhood was once a vibrant hub for cinema culture with multiple independent theaters and a legendary bookstore dedicated exclusively to film. Over the last decade, all have shuttered due to one hardship or another.

“Once we relocated the collection from Latona Avenue to Roosevelt Way in the early-1990s, much of Scarecrow’s labyrinthian charm became intricately interconnected to this cathedral-like building,” stated Jonathan Marlow, SV Archive’s Executive Director. “Many believed that acquiring our property was enticingly out-of-reach. With immense gratitude for the support of our most fervent supporters, the impossible became possible.”

Merely one year ago, Scarecrow Video itself faced the real threat of permanent closure and the unimaginable loss of its irreplaceable archive. In 2024, the organization launched the S.O.S. (Save Our Scarecrow) fundraising campaign, which ultimately raised \$1.8M to sustain operations and invest in critical staff, equipment needs and software infrastructure. Then, in early 2025, the owners of Scarecrow's building notified the organization that they were placing the property back on the market. With insufficient time to mount a robust capital campaign, the Executive team and Board of Directors moved quickly in partnership with Scarecrow's closest advocates to gather a consortium of personal loans to secure the substantial down payment before a developer could purchase the property and displace its priceless physical media collection.

“We still have a long fundraising road ahead of us, between paying off the purchase financing and much-needed improvements to make our collection and public programming even more engaging and accessible to everyone,” asserted Lacey Leavitt Gray, Board President of Scarecrow. “For today, I’m thrilled that now we can do it from a place of security, with gratitude to our community and our (now former) landlords that we’ll be able to stay—and grow—in this beloved building we call home.”

Scarecrow's archive contains nearly **155,000 titles**—roughly eight times more than all major streaming services combined—many of which will never be available digitally. These films and television episodes represent **138 countries** and **126 languages** and include vital works by BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, women and international filmmakers, preserving cinematic voices that could otherwise be marginalized or might disappear entirely. Each year, Scarecrow serves over **60,000 patrons** through its library, reaches tens-of-thousands more through free public programming across the region and connects audiences nationwide through its expansive rent-by-mail service.

“When my partners and I purchased the building in 2014, we vowed that Scarecrow would remain in place. It’s gratifying that we were able to keep that promise and we wish them the best in their forever home,” said Alan Pruzan, former building-owner. “I’ve been involved with film and arts nonprofits for decades and I’m thrilled to see an arts organization reach the important milestone of owning their space and controlling their own destiny.”

Scarecrow’s renewal has been fueled by an outpouring of community support. The aisles are teeming week after week with new and longtime visitors, drawn by curiosity and the tangible thrill of discovery. A revitalized membership program empowers affordable access and offers engaging perks while sustaining and preserving the legendary collection. Scarecrow’s focus on building real-world community and broadening partnerships has solidified its role as a cultural anchor, forged new community connections and deepened its impact along the west coast from Vancouver, British Columbia, to the Bay Area of California (with programs spread from Bellingham to Olympia and numerous cities in-between).

As the film industry continues to evolve—often prioritizing scale, speed and profit over preservation—Scarecrow remains a rare counterbalance: a place where cinema is experienced as art, history and shared human storytelling rather than disposable content. Since 1988, Scarecrow Video has been deeply beloved by generations of film lovers, artists, educators and creatives. With this purchase, the organization is no longer simply surviving in Seattle. It is grounded in community.

“This milestone ensures that Scarecrow can remain an iconic hub of creativity, connection and community for generations to come,” explained Vicky Tamaru, SV Archive’s Engagement and Strategic Partnership Director. “Owning our home allows us to invest boldly in the future while honoring the past that so many people helped to build.”

The property-purchase secures Scarecrow’s place within Seattle’s cultural landscape and stands as a powerful example of what becomes possible when communities collectively join together to protect the institutions they love.

About Scarecrow Video

Founded in 1988, Scarecrow Video (SV Archive) is a nonprofit cultural museum and library located in Seattle, Washington and the world’s largest physical media archive. Scarecrow is dedicated to preserving and making accessible the world’s diverse cinematic cultural heritages through its unparalleled video library, public programming and education initiatives that engage communities locally and nationwide. Scarecrow champions cinema as a vital cultural resource that fosters empathy, curiosity and human connection with support from 4Culture, ArtsWA, Humanities Washington and other essential institutions and community partners. More information can be found at www.scarecrow.com.