

to raise awareness leading up the broadcast date.

The Chicago show follows screenings in Portland, where Hermann is based, as well as at the Native Voice Film Festival in Rapid City, South Dakota, and the Palm Springs Native Film Festival. They'll be presenting at the Native American Journalists Conference in Denver in June.

Towfighnia and Hermann's Prairie Dust Films has spent \$140,000 in cash and an estimated \$250,000 in in-kind donations on the project. Of the cash budget, the lion's share—\$75,000—came from Native American Public Telecommunications, a PBS initiative that supports projects by and about Native American producers and subjects. The NAPT grant gives PBS domestic broadcast rights for the film.

The Playboy Foundation provided the seed money for the "Standing Silent Nation," and the Paul Robeson Fund recently granted \$10,000 to the film. Towfighnia and Hermann covered the rest of the budget through donations at fundraisers, heavily subsidized by their own income from freelance video production work.



"Standing Silent Nation" director Suree Towfighnia (left) and producer Courtney Hermann

In addition to covering ongoing completion and distribution costs, Prairie Dust is also raising funds for their sister initiative, the Lakota Media Project, which provides video equipment and training for young people on the reservation.

"They've constantly been the subjects of documentaries, but rarely have they been the makers of documentaries," Towfighnia said. "We want to make sure we give back more than we take."

Sharon Karp of Media Monster edited "Standing Silent Nation." Associate producer is Deborah White Plume, Alex's wife.

"Standing Silent Nation" screens April 6 at 6 p.m. and April 7 at 3 p.m. at Columbia College's Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., 8th Floor. The filmmakers and members of the White Plume family will speak after the screening.

Towfighnia's short documentary "Tampico," about the one-woman band subway musician, also screens in the Chicago Documentary Festival, April 4 at 2 p.m. at the Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette, and 5 p.m. April 8 at the Gallery Theatre, 1112 N. Milwaukee Ave.

See [www.myspace.com/standingsilentnation](http://www.myspace.com/standingsilentnation). —Ed M. Koziarski

*Ed M. Koziarski is in post-production on the feature film "The First Breath of Tenaan Rei." formerly "Untitled Okinawa Project." Email:*