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***AS GOES JANESVILLE TO PREMIERE ON THE PBS SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2012***

***Documentary Explores Wisconsin Town Coping with Life after the Closing of a
GM Plant That Employed Thousands***

— Series Returns this Fall on New Night - Mondays at 10 PM on PBS —

(San Francisco, CA) — Brad Lichtenstein's [*As Goes Janesville*](#) reports from ground zero of the recession-ridden heartland — the town of Janesville, Wisconsin. When bankrupt General Motors (GM) shut down the community's century-old plant in 2008 — the oldest GM plant in North America — thousands of jobs were lost. While many workers were forced to leave their families in search of decent jobs, local business leaders worked to bring new companies to town with the promise of lower wages, reduced regulation, and tax breaks. They formed a powerful alliance with newly-elected Republican governor Scott Walker, whose pro-business, anti-union stance ripped apart the state, triggering an historic recall election. The recall thrust Wisconsin's boisterous civil war between workers and the business/political power elite onto front pages nationwide. A co-production of 371 Productions (*Almost Home*), Kartemquin Films (*Hoop Dreams*), and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), *As Goes Janesville* will premiere on the PBS series [*Independent Lens*](#) on Monday, October 8, 2012 at 10PM (check local listings). The regular fall season begins on Monday, October 29, 2012.

Shot over the course of three years, the film follows the lives of four Janesville residents struggling with the town's economic changes. When GM supplier Alcoa closed their plant in 2009, Cindy Deegan was laid off after thirteen years with no option to transfer to another plant. Recruited for a federally funded program that pays to send workers back to school, Cindy forges ahead through an arduous return to the classroom and ultimately a new career. Former GM



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worker Gayle Listenbee is not so lucky. Unable to find a decent-paying job close to home, she accepts a transfer to the GM plant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, committing to six years of seeing her husband and two daughters only on weekends.

Local Janesville bank president Mary Wilmer knows all too well of the foreclosures and shuttered businesses littering her balance sheets, and she's determined to save Janesville so her three children will have a future there. She's united the region's economic development and business leaders in an effort called Rock County 5.0. The organization raised a million dollars from private sources to deploy a cadre of "ambassadors of optimism" to pitch Janesville to potential companies. Their best prospect is Shine Medical Technologies, a risky start-up that could bring 125 jobs to the Janesville area, but only if the City Council votes to give them a \$9 million incentive package.

Hoping to bridge the gap between labor and business in his fractured state, state senator Tim Cullen, the lone Democrat standing in Janesville on Election Day, tries to stake out middle ground. But his attempt to negotiate a deal to end the historic standoff between Governor Walker and senate Democrats over collective bargaining fails, and his warnings about the potential deal with Shine go unheeded. Cullen finds that his once tranquil state has changed and there doesn't seem to be room for a pragmatist. Disappointed but undeterred, he resolves to keep fighting for the middle class so that *all* Janesville residents have access to the American Dream. *As Goes Janesville*, so goes America.

To learn more about the film, visit the companion website for *As Goes Janesville* at www.pbs.org/independentlens/as_goes_janesville. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

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Filmmaker Statement

Long before the rest of America discovered Janesville, I learned about this small city in southern Wisconsin, my wife's hometown. Shortly after their GM plant shut down in December, 2008, I started making *As Goes Janesville*. For three years, I followed a disparate group of people who span the gamut, from business and political leaders to laid-off workers, in order to tell an intimate story about how a community tries to reinvent itself during economic crisis. Janesville is a true microcosm of America; good people trying in different ways to solve their economic problems during polarizing times. I hope *As Goes Janesville* can provoke dialogue that unites people across ideological and political boundaries, so they might rediscover all they have in common and work together to improve the economic health of their communities.

About the Filmmaker

Brad Lichtenstein (Producer/Director)

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Brad Lichtenstein is an award-winning filmmaker and president of Wisconsin-based 371 Productions, a media and technology company that produces social issue documentaries, public engagement campaigns, technology projects, and more. Before making his own films, Brad associate produced FRONTLINE's Peabody award-winning presidential election year special, *Choice '96*, and Lumiere Production's PBS series, *With God on Our Side: The History of the Religious Right*. With Lumiere, he produced and directed *André's Lives*, a portrait of the "Jewish Schindler;" *Safe*, about domestic violence; *Caught in the Crossfire*, about Arab-Americans after 9/11; and the BBC/Court TV co-production of *Ghosts of Attica*, about the infamous 1971 prison uprising and aftermath, for which he was awarded a Dupont-Columbia Award for Excellence in Journalism. His film *Almost Home*, about people who live and work in a Milwaukee eldercare community, aired on *Independent Lens*, and continues to be featured in workshops on aging and caregiving.

371 will also soon launch bizVizz, a transmedia component of the *As Goes Janesville* project. A mobile app and website that "makes business visible," and is designed to promote corporate transparency and accountability, "bizVizz" gives users instant access to companies' tax and employment data. bizVizz is part of a nationwide outreach campaign for *As Goes Janesville*.

Lichtenstein is currently developing *John and Elwin*, a film about race told through the story of Klansman Elwin Wilson and civil rights legend John Lewis' historic moment of forgiveness. He's also developing a transmedia project called *DJ Spooky's Quest for the Commons* about the things we share, from water to knowledge to the internet. In addition, 371 is getting into the reality game, pitching several shows, and doing work for clients like Public Allies, City Year, and Marquette University. Lichtenstein taught documentary production for five years at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he founded docUWM, a documentary film center that provides students with professional documentary experience.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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