

Edmonton-made TV drama racks up most nominations for 2014 Alberta Film & Television Awards

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Gail Stoney (Michelle Thrush), left, and Sarah Bull (Cheri Maracle) in a Blackstone episode shot in Namao, just north of Edmonton

EDMONTON - A gritty made-in-Edmonton television drama about power and politics on a fictional First Nations reserve has secured the most nominations for the 2014 Alberta Film & Television Awards.

Blackstone, a series produced by Prairie Dog Film + Television, earned 13 nominations for the Alberta-based awards affectionately known as the Rosies. The APTN series was also a finalist this year in five categories, including best dramatic series, at the prestigious Canadian Screen Awards. The show will begin filming its fourth season this spring.

Heartland, which is produced by Calgary's SEVEN24 Films, came second for the most Rosie nods, with 10 nominations. And Edmonton comedy series Tiny Plastic Men, produced by Mosaic Entertainment, is up for an award in nine categories. That show also contended for best comedy at the Canadian Screen Awards, which were doled out March 9 in Toronto.

Blackstone is up against Heartland and Hell on Wheels (Nomadic Pictures) for best dramatic series, while Tiny Plastic Men is one of six contenders in the best comedy or variety special category.

The Rosie finalists were announced Thursday morning in Edmonton. Of the 303 combined finalists, 136 go to productions based in this city, while 162 go to Calgary-produced shows. The remaining five nominations go to productions from Grande Prairie, Grande Cache and Fort McMurray.

Calgary's Corkscrew Media was the production company with the most nominations, 19, of which 13 were co-productions with Stir Films, also out of Calgary.

Prairie Dog was the Edmonton company with the most nominations, racking up 16. Mosaic Entertainment came a close second, with 15 nominations, followed by Aquila Productions, with 10 nominations.

Freezer, a feature-length action-thriller starring Dylan McDermott that was filmed in Edmonton in 2013, was nominated in six categories, including best dramatic production over 30 minutes.

The Rosies honour excellence in the Alberta film and TV industries. The winners will be announced at the awards gala April 12 in Calgary. For a full list of nominees, visit www.ampia.org.

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