

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Hoosier politics makes it to big screen

August 19, 2001

Friends of political consultant **Chris Sautter** warned him of the risks of making a movie exposing East Chicago's rough-and-tumble political world.

But the native Hoosier wanted to capture the old-fashioned machine politics that is being overtaken by political consultants (such as himself), and he thought the 1999 Democratic mayoral contest between incumbent **Bob Pastrick** and archrival **Stephen Stiglich** was the perfect subject.

The result was a 75-minute documentary, *The Kind of Steeltown: Hardball Politics in the Heartland*, which has been shown at film festivals in Los Angeles and Washington.

Sautter screened the film first for Pastrick and his family and was relieved when they applauded at the end. (The movie depicts Pastrick winning the Democratic nomination for an eighth four-year term by using an army of city workers, paid and volunteer supporters, and an aggressive sidewalk repair campaign.)

Despite the positive reception from the Pastrick family, Sautter said he still felt like **Joe Pesci** at the end of the movie *My Cousin Vinny*.

"I wanted to get the hell out of town before they changed their mind," he said.

Reviews at the Los Angeles screening were so good that the film is being shown on opening night of the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival on Sept. 8. Sautter hopes his work may also get picked up by an independent cable channel.

That still may not make Pastrick as famous as **Richard Daley**, **Boss Tweed** and other well-known political bosses. But then again, he may not need the publicity, according to one supporter quoted in the documentary.

"I was in Indianapolis and they asked about him," the voter says. "So he's known all over."