Walt Disney sets new box office record

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The Buena Vista Film Distribution Group - Buena Vista Pictures Distribution (BVPD) and Buena Vista International (BVI) - has set a new industry record for the biggest global box office year of all-time with its combined domestic and international gross exceeding $3 billion.

This milestone achievement, reached on Thanksgiving Day, was announced by Dick Cook, chairman of The Walt Disney Studios; Chuck Viane, president of Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, and Mark Zoradi, president of Buena Vista International. Domestically, BVPD is continuing to have its best year ever at the box office with a year-to-date gross of $1.48 billion (surpassing its previous high of $1.24 billion in 1999). Internationally, BVI also posted record box office receipts for the year-to-date with a sensational gross of $1.6 billion. With a full month still to go, the combined grosses for the Buena Vista Film Distribution Group now stands at $3.08 billion. This unprecedented figure easily beats the previous industry record posted by Sony in 2002, when its domestic and international tally for the market share year climbed to $2.864 billion. It also marks the eighth time in the last nine years that the Buena Vista Film Distribution Group has surpassed more than $2 billion in global box office receipts, a record unmatched by any other company.

Commenting on the announcement, Cook said, "By any measure, 2003 has been an extraordinary year for Disney's motion picture division with such hit films as 'Finding Nemo,' 'The Pirates of the Caribbean,' 'Bringing Down the House,' 'Brother Bear,' 'Freaky Friday,' 'Holes,' 'Open Range,' among others. We are very proud to have established a new industry record for the biggest global box office receipts in a single year and are grateful to our creative, distribution, and marketing teams for their hard work and special efforts in making this happen. Of course, no such record would be possible without a great line-up of films and for that we have an incredible group of talent, both in front of and behind the camera, to thank."

Viane added, "We are thrilled to be celebrating our best year ever at the box office. This is the eighth time in the last ten years that Buena Vista has passed the $1 billion mark at the box office and the seventh time in the last decade that we have been the #1 distributor in the marketplace. We became the first distributor to ever have two back-to-back $300 million releases - 'Finding Nemo' and 'The Pirates of the Caribbean.' 'Nemo,' which has already grossed $340 million domestically, is not only the highest grossing film of the year, but the all-time top-grossing animated feature in industry history. With its current gross of $305 million, 'Pirates' has the distinction of being the second highest grossing film of 2003, the all-time highest grossing film from producer Jerry Bruckheimer, and Buena Vista's all-time top grossing live-action release."

Zoradi said, "This is the biggest grossing year in BVI history and the ninth year in a row that BVI has grossed more than $1 billion at the box office. 'The Pirates of the Caribbean' is on target to become the most popular Disney banner live-action film ever released internationally, with an amazing gross to date of $345 million. 'Finding Nemo' continues to be an enormous hit overseas with a gross to date of more than $240 million and has just begun its roll-out in continental Europe and launches in Japan this coming weekend. Another major international success for us has been 'Bruce Almighty,' which has earned $204 million in BVI acquired territories, is the seventh live-action title we've distributed to surpass the $200 million plateau, and our highest grossing acquisition of all time."

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