



## **Annexing movie ranches profitable**

Productions bring income to the city and local businesses

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Annexing the Santa Clarita Valley's movie ranches into the city, through the Movie Ranch Overlay Zone, brings an economic benefit to the city and local businesses.

Permits can now be issued by the city of Santa Clarita for only \$140, said Jason Crawford, marketing and economic development manager. Because the fees are far lower than those issued by Film L.A. for the city and county of Los Angeles, it's expected to help the movie ranches attract more local filming, he said.

Permits issued by Film L.A. start at \$625, according to the price list posted on their site.

Locally, the city's film office spelled out all allowed activities that accompany any permit issued – making it easier for production companies to plan, he said.

The simple outline lets them know that the rules that exist today, are the same rules that apply tomorrow and next week and all year, Crawford said.

Another benefit to the ranches being annexed into the overlay zone, he said, is that it allows sound stages to be built at the movie ranches.

Often times, a production needs to film outdoors and also do some indoor filming at a sound stage. If a movie ranch can offer both, there's less reason for production company to leave town to complete their filming, Crawford said.

"We've been talking to some companies that want to come in (to film)," said Steve Arklin, owner of A Rancho Deluxe. "Before they were a little skittish about investing the money. Now they're not afraid to build sets they can use for multiple years."

The television series "Bones" is currently filming at Arklin's ranch.

And that's exactly what the city of Santa Clarita was hoping to hear. More filming locally translates to increased revenue being pumped into the community and spent at local businesses.

“In fact, there’s a crew eating at Denny’s right now,” Arklin said.

Some crews stay at local hotels; when they need paint they run down to a local hardware store, or gas, they go down to the local service station, he said.

“We think we’ll see an increase in amount of filming and spending by local productions,” Crawford said.

And, now that the city will be issuing the permits, Crawford said, filming activity at the movie ranches can be captured in future economic impact estimates. Before, the city could only estimate the dollars that poured into the city-based permits issued for location-filming.

The movie ranches included in the annexation this month include Sable Movie Ranch, Rancho Maria and A Rancho Deluxe.

By year-end, the city expects to have six movie ranches brought into the Movie Ranch Overlay Zone, Crawford said.

“We’re in middle of annexation for Blue Cloud, ’50s Town and Veluzat Motion Picture Ranch,” he said. “The city council already approved it. We’re just waiting for approval by L.A. County and LAFCO.”

The overlay zone doesn’t change zoning for any of the movie ranches. It just grants additional benefits to the properties to increase the amount of filming activity in Santa Clarita, Crawford said.

As for Santa Clarita’s Melody Ranch, where “Django Unchained” was filmed, it is located in a special standards district, he said. It was grandfathered in, and permitted to continue, when Santa Clarita became a city.

The city, which offers film incentives and is within the 30-mile zone, reported in January that filming contributed more than \$21.7 million in local economic impact for the 2012 calendar year.

The SCV Economic development Corporation estimated the Santa Clarita Valley as a whole was the beneficiary of \$57.5 million for the fiscal year 2011/2012.

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