

By Josh Premako
Signal Staff Writer
jpremako@the-signal.com
661-259-1234 x519

Cameras keep rolling in SCV

Film industry brought in nearly \$2M more than last January

Santa Clarita had its best January for filming since 2002 last month, with productions creating a reported \$2.3 million in economic benefit for local businesses, a huge spike from last January's total of \$367,500.

The city's film office issued only one more permit last month than in January 2008 — 25 versus 24 — but several production companies spent more time on their shoots, said Jason Crawford, the city's economic development and marketing manager.

To streamline the production application process, he said, the film office issued several multiday permits, rather than requiring individual permits for every day of a shoot.

The city logged 84 film days in January, nearly four times more than the 23 in January 2008. Any instance of filming is considered a film day, meaning if three productions are in progress on any given day, the city lists those as three filming days.

While major film productions have been focusing on other states — or countries — that offer lower production costs and permit fees, Crawford said this is a boom time for TV shows and commercials.

Shows like HBO's "Big Love," CBS' "NCIS" and "The Unit" have been based in Santa Clarita Valley for some time. A recent addition is Discovery Channel's "Doing Da Vinci," a show in the vein of "Mythbusters," which attempts to bring to life the designs of Leonardo Da Vinci.

The city's film office was set up in 2002. Prior to that, Crawford said filming permits were handled through a Los Angeles County office. Taking ownership locally has streamlined the process, he said, and has lowered permit costs.

With the U.S. economy in a tailspin, Crawford said increased filming is a shot in the arm for local businesses.

Location filming contributed an estimated \$13.5 million locally in the first seven months of the 2008-09 fiscal year, which runs from July to June, according to a city news release.

"We work with every production to make sure they know about the businesses here," Crawford said.

The Hyatt Valencia and Westfield Valencia Town Center continue to be popular filming locations, he said.