



City Film Office reports another record increase

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Film days in Santa Clarita are up in the first quarter of 2012, following on the heels of a record-breaking year in 2011.

There were 247 film days in the first quarter of 2012, compared with 211 in the same period for 2011 — an increase of 17 percent — the city of Santa Clarita's Film Office.

In the first quarter, 101 film permits were issued compared with 100 permits during the same period in 2011, said Russell Sypowicz, economic development associate with the city of Santa Clarita.

The economic impact to the area, however, is estimated to be \$5.7 million, up 61 percent in the first quarter over the same period in 2011, Sypowicz said. In the first quarter of 2011, the economic impact was estimated to be \$3.5 million.

Of the permits pulled, the majority were for television shows followed by commercials. Sixty-one percent, or 151 permits, were pulled for television programs. Fifty-eight permits, or 23 percent, were pulled for commercials.

The most notable change came in the Features category, which recorded a 70.6-percent drop in 2012. Only five permits were pulled for Features in 2012, compared to 17 permits issued in the first quarter of 2011, according to city records.

The Entertainment Business segment is one of the industry clusters identified as key to economic activity in the region.

"The film industry is one that has been successful, offering over \$20 million in economic impact annually to the community, and will continue to thrive in the Santa Clarita Valley," said Jonas Peterson, president and CEO of the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation.

At the fourth annual industry symposium held in the region March 23, industry officials said states other than California with incentives for filming are endangering this region's edge in entertainment.

There has been an exodus of production companies from California, as other states begin to offer comparable or better tax incentives for filming, said Mike DeLorenzo, president of Santa Clarita Studios. He cited Louisiana as having reached the \$1 billion filming revenue mark this past year.

Eighty representatives travelled to Sacramento in late March to address issues of concern to local residents. DeLorenzo, who was on the trip, said many legislators didn't understand how the film tax credits benefit the state economy.

On April 17, a committee approved Assembly Bill 2026, which would extend the state's film tax credits an additional five years, if signed into law.

The city of Santa Clarita has its own film-incentive program, offering refunds of basic film permit fees and portions of hotel occupancy taxes to qualifying productions.

Television shows like "NCIS" film in Santa Clarita because of the "very fast and affordable permit process," said Jim McClafferty, supervising location manager. The easy permit process is crucial when TV shows have to determine a location within a matter of days, he said.

Recent statistics show that 2011 was the best filming year the city of Santa Clarita has ever seen, and 2012 is on track to supersede those figures, Peterson said.

"We are looking very forward to the addition of Disney/ABC Studios at the Ranch and anticipate that the project will continue garnering the attention of and bring more high-quality film-related businesses to the area, catapulting the industry's presence in the Santa Clarita Valley," he said.

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