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FX's 'Lawman' shoots locally

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The new FX TV show "Lawman," about a U.S. marshal, is set in Kentucky. But the series, produced by Sony Pictures Television, will begin shooting on Wednesday -- thousands of miles away from the Bluegrass State.

The drama, which stars Timothy Olyphant and is based on the short story by Elmore Leonard, will premiere in February (Not to be confused with A&E's "Steven Seagal: Lawman," which premieres in December).

The series could easily have been filmed in Pittsburgh, where the pilot episode was shot. Instead, it has made its home in the L.A. suburb of Santa Clarita, thanks to a \$4-million state tax credit the series will receive for the first season under California's new film incentive program.

"We are extremely grateful that this new program allows us to keep the series here," said Ed Lammi, executive vice president of production for Sony Pictures Television.

"Lawman" is among 36 film and TV productions set to shoot in-state (mostly in the L.A. area) in the fourth quarter of 2009 as a result of California's new film and TV production incentive. In all, 50 productions have qualified to receive about \$100 million in tax credits since the program debuted in July. The state allocated \$500 million over a five-year period.

The program offers up to a 20% to 25% tax credit for TV series that relocate to California, new TV series produced for basic cable, movies of the week and feature films that cost less than \$75 million.

Although the state incentive has been panned by some critics as too paltry to compete with more generous incentives offered by other states, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday was eager to tout the latest numbers as evidence that the incentive is working. "It's having an immediate impact," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

Jessica Freude, film commissioner for City of Santa Clarita, wouldn't disagree. "Lawman" is among a half-dozen TV shows that are based in the city, including HBO's "Big Love" and CBS' "NCIS."

"Television series have been a hallmark of our production here," Freude said. "The fact that we can continue to support and retain these series is incredible. It's really helping to keep our local economy here."

--Richard Verrier

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