Film Office breaking records for productions

Incentive programs have also allowed the city to attract more film activity

By Jana Adkins Signal Business Editor jana@signalscv.com 661-259-1234 x599 February 7, 2013

The city's Film Office is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this month and in a nod to its success, a spokesman with the city also announced 2012 was another "record year" for local filming.

Permits were up 1 percent in 2012 over 2011, film days were up 2 percent and the estimated economic impact to the area was up 12 percent, according to a statement released by the city of Santa Clarita.

"2012 was record breaking for all years in terms of permits and days," said Russell Sypowicz with the city's economic development division. "We just missed the record for economic impact. That was set in 2004 when the impact was \$22,330,550."

Created to promote filming, the city of Santa Clarita began issuing film permits and working to lure production companies to the city in early 2003.

Since the Film Office was created a decade ago, filming has vastly increased and Santa Clarita has become one of the most filmed cities in California, the city said in a released statement.

To date, the city reports that 50 of the 244 approved projects, or 20 percent, have either filmed on location or have been based in Santa Clarita.

Among the many television shows such as CSI, JAG, The Unit, NCIS, Big Love, The Riches, Wipeout, Make It or Break It, Switched at Birth, Justified, Franklin & Bash, Vegas; Santa Clarita has been the location of choice for many feature films, commercials and more.

Since its inception, the film office has issued 2,977 permits and reported 7,963 film days, the city reported. The economic impact to the area was \$187.2 million – money estimated to have funneled into local businesses whether retail, restaurants or hotels and more.

The city's varied shoot locations and diversity in location backdrops, as well as its location in Hollywood's 30-mile zone, has been a benefit according to production companies.

And the city sweetened the offer in a bid to attract more filming business locally, which appears to be paying off.

Film Incentives

In 2009, the city also introduced a Film Incentive Program to build the filming business in the area. Over the decade those incentives have saved productions \$188,000 in film permit rebates offered by the city.

Production companies have also saved \$85,000 in law enforcement fees after the city began coordinating scheduling with the Sheriff's Department, Sypowicz said.

"We were able to pass along the city's contract rate to production companies," he said.

In exchange, the city estimates the incentives have resulted in a favorable economic impact to the local community of \$25.83 million since they were introduced in 2009.

In March of last year, the city council extended the film incentives through June 30, 2015 as part of a larger economic growth program, Sypowicz said.

In addition to filming activity that comes under the city's permit process, even more filming takes place at the many local sound stages and movie ranches.

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