



UPDATE: More lights, cameras and film action for Santa Clarita

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For the fifth fiscal year in a row, the city of Santa Clarita has set new records across the board for filming of TV and movies, the city reported Thursday.

Film permits, the number of film days, and the estimated economic benefit to the community all showed increases between July 2014 and June 2015.

“We’ve seen a lot of people take advantage of the movie ranches as well as location filming,” said Evan Thomason with the city’s film office. “Locally reoccurring TV shows are very strong still; we attribute a lot of our success this year to that.”

Among Santa Clarita-based TV shows are “Blunt Talk,” “Chasing Life,” “NCIS,” “The Player,” “Recovery Road,” “Stitchers,” “Switched at Birth” and HBO’s “Westworld.”

Other projects that filmed on location in the city last year include “Criminal Minds,” “The Mentalist” and “Sons of Anarchy,” along with feature films “Chronic,” “Furious 7,” “San Andreas,” “Ted 2” and “Yoga Hosers.”

“We’ve seen steady growth, and TV is the bread and butter,” said Kelli Lajer of the Santa Clarita Film Office. “More than half of our filming is TV production, and we’ve been doing well in commercial.”

In Los Angeles, second quarter film permits for commercials fell by 2 percent, according to reports by FilmLA this week.

While not an apples-to-apples comparison with Santa Clarita’s fiscal year numbers, L.A.’s numbers could be indicative of growing migration of film activity to Santa Clarita. And the area’s share of TV shows only increased 2.8 percent.

With the state beginning to grant newly enhanced incentives for filming within California, local film numbers could continue to grow.

And the city has just recently sweetened the deal.

More production companies will have the chance to receive permit fee reimbursements and have the transient occupancy tax waived on hotel stays for film crews in the coming year.

“The City Council just approved the film incentive program for another three years. They also expanded the allotment of funds to \$75,000 per year, up from \$50,000,” Thomason said. “We see that as a definite advantage to the local economy.”

The number of film permits issued in the last fiscal year increased 4 percent to 553.

More notably, the number of film days in the city of Santa Clarita increased 5 percent to 1,437 – averaging slightly more than four production film days on every day of the year.

As for all the cash spent at local businesses, and in some cases even for homeowners, when film crews are in town, the city estimated an economic impact of nearly \$34 million in the past fiscal year.

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