



Santa Clarita a film magnet

New HBO TV series to film locally

By Jana Adkins
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Opening at theaters this weekend, the biographical movie *Love & Mercy*, depicting creative genius Brian Wilson of the famed Beach Boys music group slide into mental illness, filmed some of its scenes in Santa Clarita off Creekside Road.

Most likely, the location stood in for the scenes where Wilson meets his current wife – who sold cars.

And as the state begins releasing its list of state approved TV and film projects, eligible for incentives for filming within the state, Santa Clarita hopes to snatch more of those upcoming projects.

This week the California Film Commission released a list of projects still eligible for state credits under the old lottery system, along with upcoming series – both new and those which have opted to return to California.

“We’re extremely supportive of filming here,” said Evan Thomason, economic development associate in the city’s film office. “Filming is very strong; it’s a big part of Santa Clarita’s economy.”

Among the new projects planning to do some filming locally is HBO’s “*Westworld Season*,” a science fiction thriller television series created for HBO according to movie database website Internet Movie Database - or IMDb.

Based on the 1973 film of the same name, which was written and directed by Michael Crichton, the series will be locally based, Thomason confirmed.

The series is among the list of only 11 new projects selected by the California Film Commission to receive tax credits under the state’s new Film and Television Tax Credit Program, which expands program funding from \$100 million to \$330 million annually.

The new projects are eligible for a combined total of \$82.8 million out of the first fiscal year’s \$230 million in funding.

Also returning with film credits in hand under the last of the state’s old lottery program are Santa Clarita-based TV series “*Recovery Road*,” “*Stitchers*” and “*Switched at Birth*.”

“Locally returning TV shows are huge to our local economy. We certainly like to see them come back here,” Thomason said.

The 11 TV productions are estimated to generate \$216 million in wages for production crew members and \$544 million in direct in-state spending, according to the state’s film office.

“This is great news for our state and especially for families who are affected by runaway film productions,” said Assembly member Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita). “The success of the California Film Tax Credit program will help keep California competitive in the entertainment world.”

Hit TV shows such as “American Horror Story” and “Veep” are currently filming in other states and thanks to the film tax credit program, they will be relocating back to California, he said in a statement to the press.

Other approved series under the last of the lottery program that have filmed locally include “Agent X,” “Hit the Floor,” “Major Crimes,” “Pretty Little Liars,” “Rizzoli & Isles,” and “Teen Wolf.”

Nine of the 27 projects approved under the lottery system have filmed in Santa Clarita, or are locally-based.

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