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Santa Clarita gets big economic boost from film industry

It's the kind of happy ending Hollywood movies are made of--the underdog gets the girl and lives happily ever after.

In this case, the quiet mastermind is the city of Santa Clarita. The girl is the city's film industry. As for the happily ever after? Well, that's the economy and the hefty boost it received from location filming in one year.

The Santa Clarita Film Office happily reports that from July 2012 to June 2013, the city felt a \$25.7 million impact from filming of TV shows like "NCIS" and movies such as all three "Iron Man" productions.

"We are obviously very pleased," said Russell Sypowicz, Economic Development Associate. "The film industry is one of our target industries and we do as much as we can to help the industry thrive and grow."

During that time period, there were 1,069 film days and 368 permits--a 22 percent jump from 2011 to 2012 when the economic impact was \$21 million.

"2011-2012 was our first record fiscal year," said Sypowicz. "This was our second year in a row posting increases."

More than 6,000 residents work for the local film and entertainment industry. Besides providing jobs, the industry makes a huge impact through spending in the area.

"It could be any number of things. It could be the money they spend to actually secure the location, the payment towards a residence or local business to film inside our outside. It can be the gas stations, or making a trip to Home Depot to pick up some supplies needed for the set creation or feeding the crew with local caterers and restaurants."

Santa Clarita is located nearly 30 miles north of Hollywood--that's a bit of a trek from movie capital of the world. Why shoot in Santa Clarita? City leaders say they make it a priority to cater to film and TV executives.

"Santa Clarita is one of Hollywood's first-choices for location filming, as shown by yet another strong year for location filming," said Mayor Bob Kellar. "Filming is a big part of our business community and local economy, supporting high paying jobs and hundreds of companies involved in the industry."

In March 2012, the City Council approved a three-year extension of the City's Film Incentive Program, which is dedicated to retaining and increasing feature and television production by reducing the costs of safety personnel and subsidizing permit fees.

"We have a very film friendly environment," said Sypowicz. "We do everything we can to make the film production a success. We have a number of different locations with our great topography. The infrastructure is important with the sound stages and movie ranches and then our film policies, with some of the lowest film permit fees in all of California."

The city also has a number of studio lots that attract production companies.

"We have over 20 sound stages where a number of locally based shows are shot. TV shows often times, rent out a sound stage for production."

Here's another draw to the northern L.A. County city: movie ranches.

"They can get any number of scenes shot on one location versus having to go to four or five locations to get the total package."

Surprisingly, Santa Clarita has been made over to look like many cities around the world, including New York and Paris. TV shoots account for nearly half of filming, with shows like "Switched at Birth," "Chasing Life," "Wipeout," and "Franklin and Bash" making Santa Clarita a star. Movie credits also include "Django Unchained" and the newly released "2 Guns."

"The Council approved annexation of three additional movie ranches to happen before end of this year--with these additions we expect to see continued growth with the film industry in Santa Clarita," said Sypowicz.

A star is born and Santa Clarita is all the happier to be a part of "The Business."

<http://www.caeconomy.org/reporting/entry/santa-clarita-gets-big-economic-boost-from-film-industry>