SAVVY STATES VIE FOR LUCRATIVE FILM BUSINESS

Producing films in the U.S. provided almost 300,000 jobs in 2013. If you gauge the economic impact of the entertainment and media industry, you will find that it supports over 2 million jobs.

States compete fiercely for this lucrative business – 42 offer tax rebates. Local production and post-production facilities, film crews, equipment and services are all crucial factors in this competition. Several states have offices to assist with everything from accounting to horse wrangling. A state legislature and governor willing to invest in rebates and infrastructure are also essential.

Four of the most film-friendly states:

**Georgia**
- 30% in transferable tax credits with no cap
- $500,000 minimum spend
- 5,000 local union/non-union professionals

**Louisiana**
- 35% rebate
- $300,000 minimum spend
- Tax credits can be returned for 85% of value or sold

**New York**
- 30% tax credit
- Eligibility varies by production budget
- Visual effects and animation have separate eligibility thresholds

**North Carolina**
- 25% refundable tax credit
- $250,000 minimum spend up to $20 million per project (TV series excluded)
- Filming on state-owned property is free

Please see each state’s website for more information.
The cost of film production insurance can rise considerably when some of the “actors” have four legs. The risks involved also rise for good reason.

Marcia Rutledge, Senior Vice President at Hiscox Insurance, has some straightforward advice for producers to mitigate these risks:

• Read the contract to understand what you are responsible for.
• Keep the public and nonessential crew off the set while animals are being used.
• If the actors interact with animals, make sure they know what they are doing and what safety precautions are in effect.
• If using dangerous animals, have a medic on the set and be near a medical facility, both equipped to deal with these types of injuries.
• Work with your broker and insurance company to verify your coverage for these exposures.

DeWitt Stern is well aware of the dangers to humans when filming with animals. In setting production insurance, the process starts with a debriefed questionnaire about the shoot and the animals and cast involved. Who handles the animals on set? Who are the trainers? How do the actors and production crew interact with the animals? The questionnaire also asks how the animals are transported and who is responsible for them during transport. Veterinary health certificates are required if production requires sickness coverage.

When the scene wraps, be careful where you celebrate. One safety rule caution, “The smell of alcohol has a disquieting effect on animals.”

Q: What are your plans for NJPAC’s coming season?

We’ll be serving even more diverse audiences. There are probably 15 different nationalities we program to over a season. We’ve increased the number of performances by 30% in Prudential Hall, which seats 2,750. We have also been doing more broadcasts out of our theaters. Major networks like using the art center as a TV production venue. Right now, American Songbook at NJPAC is doing a six-week run on NJTV and WNET. America’s Got Talent is coming back for a week of auditions here in February.

We’ll also be expanding our education programs. Every year, we reach about 60,000 students through professional training in instruments, dance or dramatics at our conservatory.

I see NJPAC as the nation’s leading performing arts center...a true touchstone for the community.

Coming up, we’ll have Jazz Meets Sports. Our jazz advisor is bassist Christian McBride and he loves sports. He put the program together with NBA icon Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, former Yankee star guitarist Bernie Williams and Chris McBride’s trio. They play together and talk about the connections between music and sports — interesting that to make great jazz and to make great teams, you have to listen to each other and improvise.

In August, we will run two improv training camps for teens with Second City from Chicago. We’re doing a jazz camp this summer for teenage girls where Geri Allen, a great pianist and composer, will be artistic director.

Q: How has NJPAC become an impetus for Newark’s rejuvenation?

There is a residential renaissance in Newark and we are happy to be in the middle of it all. We will be breaking ground soon on a 21-story apartment and retail tower on land that is part of our campus.

We have many exciting partners in this enterprise. Prudential and Panasonic are both building new headquarters in the area. Shaquille O’Neal is leading a group building a 20-story apartment tower. Rutgers’ Newark campus and the Newark Museum, one of the finest in the world, are both just a couple of blocks from us.

Q: Where do you see NJPAC in 10 years?

Still in New Jersey. We’re staying. I see NJPAC as the nation’s leading performing arts center serving hundreds of thousands of people...that offers unique educational opportunities for kids...that is a creator and a producer of content not only for our theaters, but also digitally, online, and on TV. I see us as a leader in urban arts learning – a true touchstone for the community.

For more information contact
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Front Cover: Aerial View of NJPAC courtesy of Chris Lee

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Managing Director

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center has presented music, theatre, comedy and dance to 8 million people since it opened in 1997. For more than 60,000 children, its innovative educational program has brought joy and an appreciation of the arts. NJPAC’s spectacular building and inspiring presence has become the cornerstone of downtown Newark’s revitalization.

John Schreiber, President and CEO, is well-qualified to lead NJPAC. His credentials include producing major jazz festivals and award-winning comedy, film and TV. He also heads Theater Square Development Company, the residential and retail real estate development subsidiary of NJPAC.

John Schreiber photo courtesy of Daniel Hedden

Actors + Animals: A Risky Mix

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