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Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES FALL SLATE OF MOVIES AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS SHOOTING IN ILLINOIS WORTH \$15 MILLION FOR THE STATE ECONOMY

SPRINGFIELD - Continuing to reap the rewards of the important legislation awarding tax incentives to the film industry, Governor Rod Blagojevich announced today that Illinois will host another impressive array of new film and television productions this fall. This autumn's lineup will include a major motion picture starring Jennifer Aniston, an independent film produced by homegrown talent Patrick Read Johnson, and two new reality television shows based in Chicago. The slate of fall productions is expected to pour at least \$15 million into the Illinois economy.

"Chicago and the state of Illinois have a rich film heritage. The allure of our cities and towns has always been a great match for the big and small screen. Thanks to the legislation that we passed a year ago and was recently renewed, we're once again seeing films that are set in Chicago being filmed in Chicago, and that's great news for the working men and women of our production community, as well as the overall strength and diversity of the Illinois economy. While we believe our brightest lights are still to shine, Illinois is reclaiming its rightful place in the film world," Governor Blagojevich said.

In August of 2003, Governor Blagojevich signed Senate Bill 785, which created a new tax incentive designed to attract the film industry back to Illinois. The incentive was just renewed for another year during the past legislative session. The law provides a tax credit equal to 25% of the wages paid to Illinois residents working on television and film projects shot in Illinois. In order to qualify, productions of 30 minutes or more will have to spend at least \$100,000 on Illinois labor. Other, shorter film productions may also qualify for the incentive.

"Thanks to the tax incentive legislation, we're winning the fight to bring the film industry back to Illinois. These four new productions scheduled to begin this fall are a welcome investment in our local talent, as well as the economy at large. Governor Blagojevich continues to pursue economic growth and job creation from every available avenue, an approach that will continue to strengthen the economic vitality of our state," Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said.

Miramax Films' "Derailed," a drama/thriller directed by Michael Hafstrom and starring Jennifer Aniston and Clive Owen, tells the story of a how a businessman's life takes an unexpected criminal turn after he misses a morning train. It is slated to begin production in Chicago this fall.

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Patrick Read Johnson's independent film "5-25-77," an autobiographical coming of age story set on the day "Star Wars" was released, will begin production in late August. The film is a production of Johnson's Moonwatcher Inc., based in his far-North suburban hometown of Wadsworth. The picture will shoot in the Waukegan area for four to six weeks. Additionally, two new reality television series will tape in Chicago beginning this fall.

Through August, the film industry's investment in Illinois is estimated to be \$75 million, up approximately 200% versus all of 2003's film revenue. The fall season's additional \$15 million should bring the year-end total for 2004 to approximately \$90 million, a 260% increase versus 2003. In addition, through June of this year, film and television productions in Illinois have employed more than 8,000 people versus approximately 1,000 people for the same period one year ago, a figure that is likely to nearly double by year-end.

"This fall there will be four new productions filming or taping in Illinois. This is a reflection of the continued success of the tax incentives designed to attract the film industry back to Illinois where it belongs," said Illinois Film Office Managing Director Brenda Sexton. "Since this tax legislation was passed and recently renewed, we have been able to attract nine films to Illinois, keeping our talented production and union people working and increasing the dollars spent in our state."

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