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## **Attracting the film industry brings dividends to Michigan**

**By Senator Jason Allen**

Lights, camera, action.

Thanks to the efforts of many policymakers, Michigan is becoming a more attractive place for filmmakers to consider when searching for a location to shoot motion pictures and commercials.

The competition with other states is fierce, and Michigan has taken an important step to remain a player. Considering the serious challenges facing our uncertain economy, we couldn't afford to neglect any job providers.

In the past 15 years, the film industry has brought up to \$20 million into the state in a year, but that figure dropped to around \$2 million in 2006, the lowest in more than a decade.

Michigan was losing ground and something needed to be done. That's why I strongly supported the Michigan Film Incentive. The new law gives money back to any film production company – from Michigan or elsewhere – that spends between \$200,000 and \$10 million in Michigan. Some companies will receive up to a 20 percent refund.

It's an investment that's worth every penny that translates into jobs. Thanks to incentives, Louisiana went from \$12 million to more than a half billion of economic impact in less than five years. Louisiana is the role model for how to attract interest. Other states, such as Illinois, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and New Mexico, have also seen significant increases in film and commercial business once their incentives went into place.

Janet Lockwood, director of the Michigan Film Office, hopes that the new incentive will increase the Michigan economic impact from films by at least 300 percent during the first year and even higher in subsequent years.

From actors and directors to set crews and post production facilities, northern Michigan and our entire state has a wealth of talent to offer film, commercial and documentary production companies. Other attractions include our vast natural resources and temperate climate and having four seasons. Being surrounded by the Great Lakes also provides a myriad of locations for filmmakers to consider.

(More)

We've taken an important first step, but the film industry in Michigan needs to be nurtured. As a longtime advocate of the Michigan Film Advisory Commission and as chair of the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee, I see infinite potential as we reach out to those making motion pictures, documentaries and commercials.

Because our competitors have a head start, it will take considerable effort to woo production companies to Michigan. But now that we can focus on the benefits of the Michigan Film Incentive, at least we're in the picture.