

Guest Column: Tax credit has helped boost film, TV industry

By John Lanza
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Since 2006, when Connecticut implemented its film, television and digital media tax credit program, film production investments statewide increased from \$700,000 to \$500 million.

This dramatic growth has benefited Connecticut's economy across the board — from coffee shops and restaurants to hardware stores, printing shops and dry cleaners. Additionally, an estimated \$1.5 billion in economic value has been generated from activities related to the film, television and digital media industry.

We're seeing the loss of construction, retailing and manufacturing jobs across the state. As we look to establish permanent jobs to stimulate and diversify Connecticut's economy, and promote sustained economic growth, we need look no further than an industry that has proven itself on these terms: the film, television and digital media industry.

Once a production decision is made, infrastructure, work force and support services rapidly follow, causing a chain reaction of growth. Establishing the infrastructure and work force attracts new projects, and the cycle continues.

Location, location

Millions of dollars are re-invested into states that regularly host film and television productions. In New York, New Mexico and Massachusetts, where they've had more experience, studies have shown significant job growth and increased tax revenue because of incentive programs.

Connecticut's scenery, proximity to New York and existing industry infrastructure, make the state an ideal location for many film and television productions and digital media ventures.

Connecticut's success has attracted interest from several film and television companies looking to build new studios, among them Pacifica Ventures, NBC Universal and The United Studios of America. The Pacifica Ventures complex, Connecticut Studios, estimates it will create 500 construction jobs, 114 permanent jobs and up to 1,500 studio production jobs. NBC Universal will create 150 to 200 permanent jobs with at least that many support jobs. These projects bring production jobs to the state and cultivate supporting industries fostering additional growth.

On the digital media front, companies like Blue Sky Animation and NBC Digital have relocated to Connecticut, bringing with them more than 500 jobs.

The incentive program has been the catalyst for renewed investment and economic growth. Rather than undermine one of the few growth industries, state leaders should support the film, television and digital media tax credit program to help put Connecticut on the road to economic recovery.

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