



2022 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
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Economic Development

Oral and Written Testimony By:

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When I started with Film Albany, a division of Discover Albany 17 years ago I was told I may get an inquiry or two about a commercial and I would assist them....
Well, that inquiry or two has turned into much more!

Let me share with you quickly what some of our numbers were over 2021 – while our destination was still being negatively impacted by Covid.

of inquiries – 270 – most of that was for Albany but other county questions were included in that.

Over 6,500 individuals viewed our Film Albany promotional page.

We had the following production's film here in Albany and around the Capital Region:

- HBO's White House Plumbers featuring Woody Harrelson shot here twice.
- HBO's Pretty Little Liars – Shooting at Upriver Studios in Saugerties and looked to us for the crew.
- HBO's Gilded Age – shot in Troy, I am sure you all heard about that AND they were just back scouting Albany and Troy at the beginning of February.

- Showtime shot here twice with *Billions* and *3 Women*.
- *Resurrection* an Indy feature shot in the Capital Region over the summer and went on to debut at Sundance.
- Another Indy feature *The Oath* shot here in August. That producer came from Utah based on our reputation.
- *Paint* shot in Saratoga featuring Owen Wilson.

Now let me share the best part with you....the economic benefit that came into our communities, utilizing those local businesses, those Mom & Pop shops, and our hotels that sat empty for months because of Covid. The Association of Film Commissioners International estimates that when a TV or film production comes into a community the economic spend is \$125,000 - \$165,000 per day.

Here's what that looks like:

White House Plumbers (x2):

Generated over 700 sleeping room nights;
 Bought out the downtown Albany food trucks so they could utilize the street as a location;
 Location fees were paid to Jack's Oyster House, The State Room, Office of General Services locations, and local space was rented for offices, hair, makeup, and Covid testing;
 Can I also add that Woody Harrelson closed Dover & Deer just about every night with his crew?

Gilded Age:

Shot mostly in Troy. We provided them with attractions and entertainment information and they utilized those resources in their downtime.

- **5,770 sleeping room nights** consumed.

At the same time, we had *Paint* shooting in Saratoga with Owen Wilson:

- *Paint* utilized 483 sleeping room nights as well as some Airbnb's
- *Paint* bought out the Saratoga Springs City Center as their home base.
- Other local businesses that benefited were Walt & Whitman Brewing, Olde Bryan Inn, Cooperstown Distillery, and SUNY Adirondack

Showtime *Billions* – working with OGS and utilizing our government buildings:

- 751 sleeping room nights consumed

Then Showtime's *3 Women* reached out – Albany is a perfect double for Fargo North Dakota:

- They utilized downtown parking lots and streets along with Arlene's Artist Materials on Fuller Road and Modern Art Tattoo in downtown Albany....both were paid location fees.

- Utilized 108 sleeping room nights.

Sprinkled in during all of those shows we had two Indy features that shot in Albany and the surrounding area.

- *Resurrection:*
75% local crew employed along with picking up 1,661 sleeping room nights.
- *The Oath* (that gentleman from Utah) shot at Thatcher Park over several days and utilized 977 sleeping room nights.

I also would like to point out that even though Amazon's *Modern Love* did not shoot here last year, (it was the year before) the production contracted Mazzone's catering to feed their entire crew/actors (around two hundred) over 8 weeks.

And of course, it is not just the economic impact....all of these productions added an esprit de corps to our communities, created a buzz, and shined a light through a very dark Covid tunnel.

These productions do not just come in and take over our communities, they create relationships and become part of our communities so they can come back time and time again.

In closing, I would like to share what a couple of other states have done:

- New Jersey is expanding their tax credits for film, tv, and digital media productions in an ongoing push to make the state a top destination for high-profile projects. The New Jersey Film and Media Tax Credit Program were created in 2018 and then expanded in 2021 as part of a \$14.5 billion incentive package to advance the state's Covid recovery plan.
- California continues to face stiff competition from Mexico, Georgia, Louisiana, and other states that have taken to increasing their tax credits to attract film and TV productions. The number of shows shot in California dropped by 39 percent between 2020 and 2021 – the steepest decline amongst the top filming destinations. Let's keep our film and TV productions in NYS and not send them to New Jersey.

Thank you for your time and continued support!