

## TV News

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### Nevada aims to lure filmmakers, TV shows

#### Current bill would provide 25% tax credit

By Josh Chetwynd

When it comes to luring television and film production, Nevada has been gambling for years.

As one of only six states that don't offer tax incentives for filming, Nevada has been betting that the allure of Las Vegas and other scenic locales would be enough to attract cameras into its borders. It has paid off to some degree, but an effort is now under way to assure consistent production is more of a sure thing,

The state Legislature is considering a bill -- the Motion Picture Jobs Creation Act -- that is expected to provide a 25% tax credit for movie or television projects spending at least \$250,000 in qualifying in-state expenses, such as labor and transportation costs. It also requires that 60% of the project's shooting days occur in Nevada.

Nevada Film Office director Charlie Geocar is believes incentives are essential for maximizing the state's opportunities to secure lucrative shoots from the entertainment industry. After 10 consecutive years of more than \$100 million in revenue from TV, movie and commercial companies, Nevada's local income in this area saw a 10% drop in 2010. In a state where the unemployment rate is 13.2%, which is 4% above the national number, increased production means increased work, Geocar says.

"It is substantial," he says. "It helps hotels, caterers, and automobile rental companies. It helps the economy as there is a ripple effect. When there's lots of production, we have a lot of local people making a living and they are in turn are putting money back into the economy."

Whether Geocar will get his wish for incentives remains to be seen. Since 2005, there have been three similar bills introduced before the State Legislature that have failed to pass. But unlike those efforts, this one has not received any vocal opposition to date.

Even if this bill passes into law, it's unclear how much it will increase production. Beyond the pull of Las Vegas, the state does have numerous other more rural locations throughout the state -- including a number of picturesque northern Nevada towns -- that could be ideal for shooting. Nevertheless, those spots compete with similar options in other regional states, which have long histories of courting filmmakers.

Most notably, New Mexico has been a popular choice. It offers a 25% tax incentive (though efforts are under way to lower that number) and has also built up a robust infrastructure for productions.

"They have a great crew base in New Mexico," says Michael De Luca, a producer on "The Social Network."

In addition, the parameters of the proposed Motion Picture Jobs Creation Act limit which productions can take advantage of the tax breaks.

"CSI," which has its plots based in Las Vegas, is seemingly a perfect show to benefit. But the CBS drama shoots approximately only two weeks a year in Nevada's biggest city, a commitment that represents only 5% of its schedule.

Moreover, "CSI" primarily brings its own crew, though it does contribute to the economy by hiring local transportation.

As a result, it is unlikely the proposed incentives would increase the "CSI" outlay or time spent in Las Vegas, according to exec producer Louis Milito.

Still, there is little doubt that some producers will take a longer look at an incentive-laden Nevada when planning their scheduling.

"Anything that you go to New Mexico to do, you could go to Nevada," says De Luca, who shot in Las Vegas for his blackjack-themed film "21." "I think there would be a lot of reasons to take advantage of Nevada incentives if they existed because of proximity (to Los Angeles). Because of what we spend on food and travel, it may be worth it to go to Nevada."