

# HOLLYWOOD SOUTH REBOUNDED

BY GARY MICHAEL SMITH GUEST COLUMNIST



New Orleans nearly lost Hollywood South after Hurricane Katrina forced productions to move to points

north, specifically Shreveport-Bossier. There, executive producers found the community to embrace the film business so much that a majority of productions are now shot there—a city smaller than New Orleans with around 370,000 residents.

Shreveport provided a ready and willing attitude, and has shown consummate commitment to welcoming the film industry—from the wave pool built for the *The Guardian* to Millennium Pictures' construction of the \$10.3-million soundstage and production facility. Other accomplishments include StageWorks of Louisiana, Stage West studio, Mansfield Studios, Fairfield Studios, and the Robinson Film Center. This has earned "The

Shreve" the distinction of "third best place to live, work and make movies," according to *Movie Maker Magazine*.

## NEW ORLEANIANS ARE STRIVING TO BRING WELL-NEEDED CINEMA DOLLARS BACK TO OUR CITY.

While we're happy for Shreveport, New Orleanians are striving to bring well-needed cinema dollars back to our city. And more than two years after the storm, the city is seeing a lot more action. Such films as *Robo-Sabien*, *Patriots*, *Final Destination 4*, *Cirque Du Freak*, and *12 Rounds* are all filming in and around New Orleans. An administrator at the Governor's Office of Film and Television Development recently stated that as many as 48 film and television productions are slated to shoot in Louisiana as of January 2008, compared to 53 productions shot in 2007. This number naturally will grow throughout the year.

Another impressive aspect is how the New Orleans industry is helping to train cast and crew,

whether they work locally or throughout the state. Developed through Jennifer Day and her staff, the New Orleans Film Commission now has a functional and user-friendly Web site for the New Orleans Office of Film and Video. Here, locals can list themselves for crew, services, and food/lodging jobs. See [www.filmneworleans.org](http://www.filmneworleans.org).

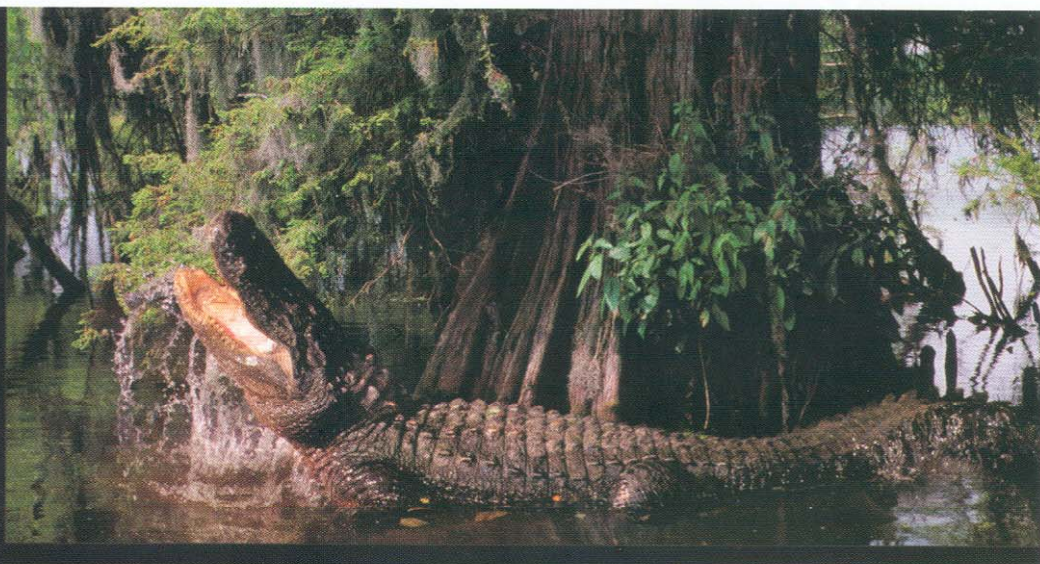
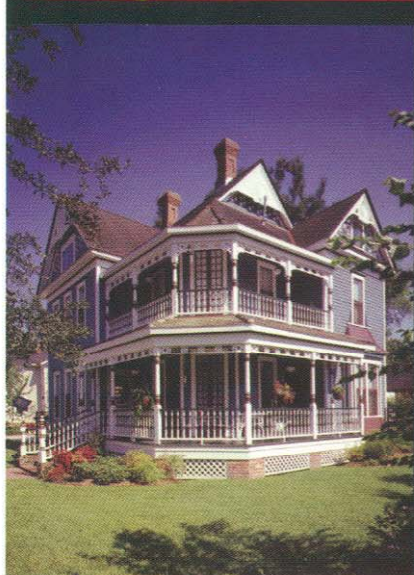
Also, New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC) is a certified provider of post production Final Cut Pro training, as well as a school for production assistants or individuals who want to learn more about production, helping them get a foot into the burgeon-

ing business. [www.novacvideo.org](http://www.novacvideo.org).

For years, the University of New Orleans has offered acting classes through its theatre department. But many don't know that voice and diction training is also provided, as is a popular course titled "Movie Extra 101," which teaches locals not only how to get jobs as extras but also provides guidance in other aspects of working in the film industry. Both are offered through the Metropolitan College at [www.metro.uno.edu](http://www.metro.uno.edu). In addition, we also have a statewide stunt actor's association. See [www.louisianastunts.com](http://www.louisianastunts.com).

There are other projects and plans for future production and training facilities on the horizon, but for now New Orleanians are availed a plethora of amenities commensurate with efficient and professional film and video productions.

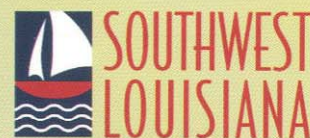
*Gary Michael Smith is an author and instructor in New Orleans. He can be reached at [gsmith@datasync.com](mailto:gsmith@datasync.com).*



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