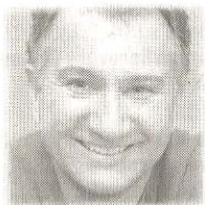


Short-term filming, long-term benefits



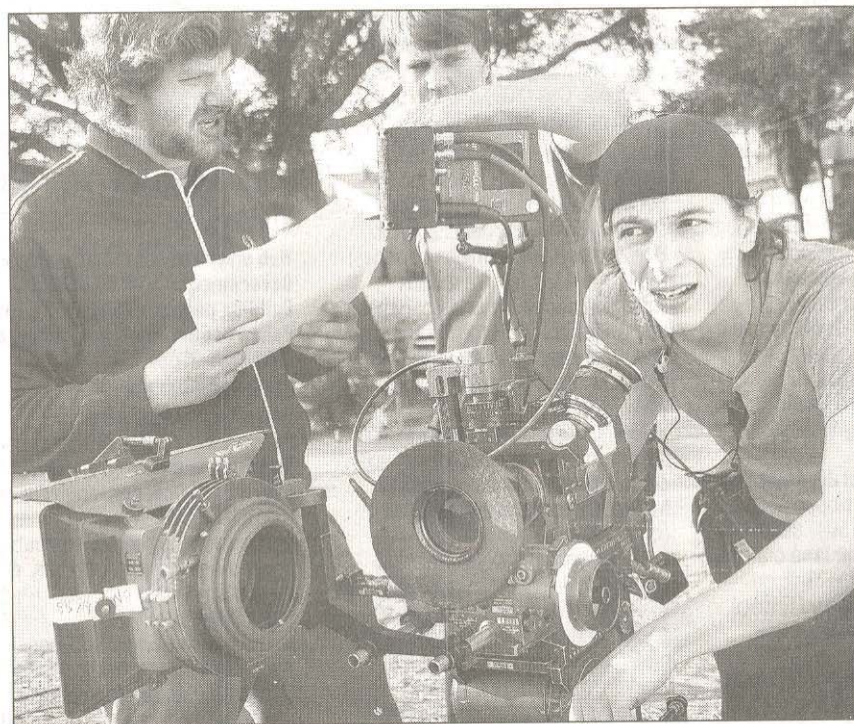
GARY M. SMITH

Point of View

Locals need to understand the positive impact the film industry has had on New Orleans. Temporary inconveniences like street, bridge, and Causeway closures result in long-term benefits. Filmmaking brings millions of dollars flowing into our economy through purchase of construction supplies, props from antique and second-hand stores, and food and drinks from restaurants and bars, as well as payroll for local crews, actors and extras — all that helps finance the rebuilding of our city.

We all but lost New Orleans' "Hollywood South" (or "HoSo") after Katrina forced productions to move to points north because bonding companies refused to cover filming between June and November. And not wanting to lose valuable Louisiana tax incentives, crews moved to the largest metro area in the state closest to the Dallas Panavision camera distribution center — Shreveport-Bossier.

Executive producers were embraced warmly in the area. Shreveport had a ready and willing attitude, and



DANNY BOURQUE / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE ARCHIVES

Students from Columbia University in New York and the University of New Orleans shoot scenes for the short film 'The Second Line' in 2006.

has shown consummate commitment to welcoming the film industry. The city built a wave pool large enough to film ocean scenes for the Kevin Costner movie "The Guardian," and Millennium Pictures is working to construct a \$10.3-million soundstage and production facility.

Other accomplishments include construction of Teri McGuire's Stage West studio, Dana McCommon's Fairfield Studios and the Glen Berg-

gren-designed Robinson Film Center. This has earned Shreveport, a city far smaller than New Orleans, the distinction of "sixth best place to live, work and make movies," according to Movie Maker Magazine.

While we're happy for Shreveport, a positive attitude from New Orleanians can help bring well-needed cinema dollars to our city. According to Kevin Barraco, editor-in-chief of Louisiana Film and Video Magazine, close to \$200 million worth of film-making is

set to shoot in the state during the first quarter of 2008 with more than \$500 million having been spent in the state in 2007.

More than two years after the storm, New Orleans is seeing more action. Executive producer Jerry Bruckheimer had scriptwriters rewrite portions of "Deja Vu" to incorporate disaster scenes. He was determined to complete his film in New Orleans, perhaps as a tribute to our city and people.

He's not alone. 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 with 53 productions shot in 2007. This number naturally will grow throughout the year.

According to the Louisiana Film Commission, 17 independent and major motion pictures currently are in production or pre-production in Louisiana. Some productions that have recently wrapped in New Orleans include "Waking Madison," "Welcome to Academia," "Black Water Transit," "Racing for Time," "The Yellow Handkerchief," "College" and "Solstice."

As more producers and directors realize that 500-year hurricanes are rare, and remember that New Orleans offers an unparalleled cinematic venue, productions will continue to return.

But we must welcome them — and live, at least for a little while, with their inconveniences.

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