

New Mexico Business Weekly - June 6, 2008

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NEW MEXICO BUSINESS WEEKLY

Friday, June 6, 2008

Film spending in Albuquerque could reach \$150 million in 2008

New Mexico Business Weekly - by [Megan Kamerick](#) NMBW Staff

The film industry has brought about \$250 million in direct spending to Albuquerque in the past five years and is on track to bring \$150 million to the city this year alone.

"This just continues to be a huge win-win for the city and the state," said Mayor Martin Chávez. He discussed the industry's impact on Albuquerque this week along with Ann Lerner, the city's film liaison.

A number of productions are filming in the city now, including the fourth installment of the "Terminator" film series, which Chávez said is the biggest film shooting this year in the country in terms of budget (between \$150 and \$185 million).

"Crash," the television series based on the Academy Award-winning film, is also shooting here. Paul Haggis, who directed the original film, is the executive producer. Dennis Hopper will star. About 90 percent of the crew members are New Mexicans, Lerner said.

And Winrock Mall is hosting "Observe and Report," a \$25 million Seth Rogan film for **Warner Bros.** Warner Bros. also made "North Country," "Beerfest," and "Around the Bend" here.

The television series "Breaking Bad" is back after getting picked up for a second season by Sony AMC. And "Legion," starring Paul Bettany, did some filming here as well, Lerner said.

While "Crash" uses Albuquerque for Los Angeles, "Breaking Bad" and "In Plain Sight," on the **USA Network**, are both set in Albuquerque. "In Plain Sight" premiered on June 1 and had the highest ratings of any show on USA in the past four years with 5.3 million viewers, Lerner said.

"We're pretty excited about having 5.3 million viewers know the word Albuquerque, see the word Albuquerque on the screen," she said.

Chávez said the series premier had great scenes in Albuquerque, including people exiting the Rail Runner. The value of that kind of exposure is almost priceless, he said.

"That forms an attitude and opinion," he said. "We're projected as a creative place, a unique place. That ultimately attracts investment as well."

Lerner said another television series she couldn't name will be coming here to shoot 13 episodes and a low-budget independent film is on the horizon as well.

"There is a lot of interest for this fall and winter being expressed," she said.

Chávez said it's important to keep the city film-friendly, especially when people experience traffic disruptions or other issues.

"Los Angeles got jaded and cynical and started to become unfriendly, so it's really important that Albuquerqueans, individually and collectively, continue to put on a smiling face for these folks."

New Mexico has some of the most generous film incentives in the nation and the industry continues to grow rapidly here. At least 95 major feature films and television projects have shot in New Mexico over the past 5 years, adding \$1.6 billion to the state's economy, according to Gov. Bill Richardson's office.

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