



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the City Council

DATE ISSUED: March 28, 2016 REPORT NO: 16-032

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Special Events and Filming Department

ATTENTION: Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

SUBJECT: Report from the Special Events and Filming Department regarding Filming Program Manager Activities and Accomplishments

REQUESTED ACTION: This report is for information only. No action is required by the Committee.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: This report is for information only. No action is required by the Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ITEM BACKGROUND:

As part of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, Mayor Kevin Faulconer and the City Council pledged their support to reinvigorate the effort to attract more film productions to the San Diego region through the creation of a Filming Program Manager position and the allocation of \$225,000 in non-personnel funds.

To demonstrate the region's commitment to collaborate in the effort to increase the growth of the film industry, San Diego County Supervisor Dave Roberts committed to advocate for \$125,000 in County Neighborhood Reinvestment Program (NRP) funds, as well as \$20,000 to have an economic analysis on San Diego's film industry prepared.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year, significant progress has been made in eight key areas to support the development of a comprehensive and sustainable filming program in San Diego.

BACKGROUND

Originally created in 1976 as a division within the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Film Commission, then named the San Diego Motion Picture and Television Bureau, was tasked with promoting and facilitating film production in the region. The organization became an independent non-profit entity in 1997.

San Diego Film Commission received funding from a combination of sources including the San Diego Tourism Marketing District, City of San Diego, County of San Diego, and the San Diego Unified Port District. In 2012, the San Diego Film Commission was incorporated into the San Diego Tourism Authority, and subsequently disbanded in 2013.

Following the dissolution of the San Diego Film Commission in 2013, the City of San Diego's Special Events Department took on the responsibility of filming authorization and production

facilitation for City of San Diego public property. While the City and other jurisdictions worked collaboratively to ensure that filming in San Diego was welcomed with a simple fee-free authorization process, there was no collective effort to aggressively market the region as a filming destination to the film industry.

EIGHT KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS

Since July 1, 2015, a number of concurrent efforts have taken place to best position San Diego as a leading filming destination. Highlights of these efforts are summarized in the eight key areas of progress described in this report.

1. Selection of a Filming Program Manager

In order to provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive Film Program designed to increase filming in San Diego as well as support the region's existing members of the film industry, the Mayor and City Council established the Filming Program Manager position.

The role of the Filming Program Manager is multi-faceted and is intended to be dynamic in order to meet the needs of the ever-changing film industry. Core to the position is the responsibility to collaborate with City departments, agencies, and other jurisdictions to establish a customer-service oriented, streamlined production process for filming; explore and implement innovative technology solutions in order to provide resources to the local, national, and international film industry, in order to establish San Diego as a leading filming destination.

Through a competitive process, Brandy Shimabukuro was selected as the City's first Filming Program Manager and assumed her position in December 2015. Ms. Shimabukuro has an extensive background in developing and managing marketing and communications programs, technology solutions, and community involvement to support neighborhood and economic development initiatives.

With the addition of the Filming Program Manager to its department, the Special Events Department officially changed its name to the Special Events and Filming Department to demonstrate its commitment to the distinct industries the Department supports.

2. Facilitation of Ongoing Film Productions

While there has been a general assumption that filming ceased when the former organization dissolved, statistics reveal that filming in the City of San Diego is ongoing. During Fiscal Year 2015, more than 1,200 days of filming took place on City public property alone, not including filming on private property and in other jurisdictions. Highlights of some of the productions include:

- **Television:** Keeping Up With The Kardashians, The Voice, Mysteries at the Museum, World's Smartest Cities, Shark Tank, Bar Rescue, Barmageddon, Junk Food Flip II, Tiny House Hunting, The Good, the Mad, and the Hungry, Storage Wars, and Boondocking
- **Movies:** The Hardest Thing, A Life Lived, Haunted, and numerous documentaries
- **Ad Campaigns:** Nationwide commercial and print campaigns for Mercedes-Benz, Fiat, Ford, Chrysler, Jeep, Subaru, Kia, Kawasaki, Polaris, Sony, Hollister, American Eagle Outfitters, Bayer, Intuit, AT&T, LG, Samsung, Fandango, Lululemon, Asics, and Mizuno

In order to draw a higher quantity and more diverse filming to the San Diego region, the Filming Program Manager is now actively working with producers, location managers/scouts, and local industry leaders as a dedicated point of contact for film authorization on City public property, preliminary location assistance, facilitation, and liaising with other jurisdictions.

Many televisions shows and ad campaigns similar to those filmed in San Diego during the previous fiscal year, as well as new projects, have returned this fiscal year. Notable examples of new film productions that have taken place in San Diego during this fiscal year include:

- **Television:** TNT's *The Last Ship*, 20th Century FOX's pilot, *Pitch*, ABC Family/Freeform's *Monica the Medium Season 2*, Travel Channel's *Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations*, Lifetime's *Project Runway*, E! *Total Divas Season 5*, Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, Cooking Channel's *Junk Food Flip II*, Travel Channel's *Food Paradise*, DIY's *Yard Crashers*, and MTV's *Catfish*
- **Movies:** *Hail Caesar!* (scene filmed on Public Utilities Department-managed property), and several independent and short films
- **Ad Campaigns:** Nationwide commercial and print campaigns for Bentley, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Subaru, Jeep, Yamaha, Polaris, Kawasaki, Eastbay/Foot Locker, Samsung, Qualcomm, Appleseeds, and Tempur-Pedic

3. Benchmarking Online Best Practices

In this increasingly digital world, providing relevant, comprehensive online resources is the most accessible opportunity to engage any industry, but especially the film industry where technology and immediacy are valued.

To measure how San Diego compared to other top filming destinations, the Filming Program Manager conducted a competitive analysis of online services offered by top film offices and commissions nationwide.

The Filming Program Manager identified 34 cities and regions of comparable size and population to San Diego, or that have hosted significant filming activity in recent years, and/or were ranked by *MovieMaker Magazine* on their Best Places to Live Work as a *Moviemaker* lists. These include:

| | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| Albuquerque, NM | Las Vegas, NV** | Portland, OR |
| Asheville, NC* | Long Beach, CA | Redwood Coast, CA |
| Atlanta, GA | Los Angeles, CA | San Antonio, TX |
| Austin, TX | Memphis, TN | San Francisco, CA |
| Baton Rouge, LA | Mendocino County, CA | Santa Fe, NM** |
| Boston, MA | Missoula, MT | Savannah, GA |
| Chicago, IL | New Orleans, LA | Seattle, WA |
| Cincinnati, OH | New York, NY | Toronto, Canada |
| Denver, CO | Orlando, FL | Vancouver, BC |
| Honolulu, HI | Pittsburgh, PA | Washington D.C. |
| Imperial Valley, CA | Portland, ME | Wilmington, NC |
| Kauai, HI | | |
| <p>* Asheville, NC does not have a dedicated film office. Their regional film office, Western North Carolina Film Commission, closed in late 2015 due to loss of state funding.</p> <p>** Las Vegas, NV and Santa Fe, NM do not have dedicated film offices/commissions. Inquiries are referred to their state film offices, the Nevada Film Office and New Mexico Film Office, respectively.</p> | | |

The most significant finding of the competitive online services analysis was that the majority of film destinations (61%) provide a fully-integrated suite of online services, including a digital location gallery and crew production directory, to their clients powered by a third party software provider, Reel-Scout. Based on this research, the Special Events and Filming Department commenced initial licensing conversations with Reel-Scout in early December 2015.

Additional information obtained from the online services analysis indicated that San Diego lacked a wide range of information on its website that could be provided in order to position San Diego as a more competitive filming destination.

Based upon this information in December 2015, the City of San Diego entered into a licensing agreement with Reel-Scout to implement the suite of services developed specifically to support a film office and its clients. Staff also immediately began coordination with the City's Department of Information Technology to make improvements to the Department's filming related website content.

4. Implementation of Reel-Scout Location Gallery

Traditionally, one of the primary services managed and provided by a film office is the contents of a location gallery. A location gallery is a visual representation of a collection of properties for both still and film shoots designed to match the various production needs across a wide range of industries such as fashion, lifestyle, and automotive brands as well as commercials, feature films, and television.

Film offices, historically, maintained large libraries of hardcopy photographs. Location scouts either visited the film office to review resources in the library or film offices assembled hardcopy presentations of potential filming locations that were mailed directly to a potential client. This was a time consuming, labor intensive, and expensive process that required a production to first identify a particular destination as the desired filming location and then either travel to or enter into extensive discussions with the destination to identify potential filming locations.

With the advent of online technology there has been a significant shift in the manner in which location galleries are managed and used by the film industry. Reel-Scout has been at the forefront of advancement through the development of web-based software to support online location galleries that enable a film destination to promote and provide 24/7 digital access to its filming locations.

Moreover, film offices that provide location galleries through Reel-Scout are connected to an international search engine for all licensed Reel-Scout location galleries known as LocationsHub.

The following are two examples of how these powerful tools might be used by the film industry:

a. San Diego's Location Gallery

A location scout or producer for a travel network in another city, state, or country may seek to film in San Diego. Using San Diego's online Location Gallery, they can assemble a digital presentation of potential filming locations for review by studio executives. Because each digital photograph is linked to interactive mapping through Google, live weather data through

The Weather Channel, and direct contact to the Filming Program Manager for additional information, the studio executives can make informed decisions in a cost effective and timely manner.

b. International Location Hub

A major feature film production located in a foreign country may seek a location for a scene that depicts a city skyline that incorporates a military presence and iconic bridge. LocationsHub is a popular solution for global location scouts and producers because the gallery aggregates all locations and photographs entered into the individual Location Galleries of filming destinations licensed through Reel-Scout. Therefore, San Diego locations are continually included with LocationsHub inquiries, ensuring San Diego is now able to compete with other top filming destinations worldwide.

The San Diego Reel-Scout Location Gallery went live on the City's website in January 2016. When launched, the San Diego Reel-Scout Location Gallery included approximately 600 locations, representing a wide variety of locations available for filming within the San Diego region. Furthermore, the Location Submission Engine is currently being configured, with expected implementation next month. The Location Submission Engine will allow individual business and property owners throughout the region to showcase their film-friendly locations.

In an effort to rapidly expand the content on the site, representatives from the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, and Port of San Diego have attended training sessions in order to provide information from their respective jurisdictions. The Filming Program Manager will expand training to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and other community organizations later this fiscal year.

5. Development of Reel-Crew Production Directory

Another traditional function of a competitive film office has been the provision of a local crew and filming related services directory. Previously, in San Diego, this took the form of a hardcopy paid-advertising/listing directory that was printed annually. Should a member of the local film industry not be in the position to pay for a listing or miss the deadline for print production, they would not be listed in that year's directory.

Once again, the use of technology has provided an opportunity for San Diego to provide a cutting-edge solution in the form of an online directory to promote and support the local industry through the Reel-Scout suite of services. Known as Reel-Crew, the software powers what has become the industry standard, a searchable, online directory for crew and support services.

The Reel-Crew production directory is being configured for the San Diego region and will be implemented to showcase the depth and diversity of the talented crews and support services based in region. This will allow San Diego to attract productions for more than just our locations while supporting and sustaining local industry jobs. Unlike the common model with other film offices, Reel-Crew registration and access will be free and available to all locally-based film industry crews and support services. As opposed to traditional print directories, Reel-Crew listings can be updated at any time without the pressure or lag of print deadlines. Reel-Crew, however, also offers the City the flexibility of printing a copy of the directory database upon request from productions that prefer that medium.

When completed, members of the local film industry will be able to use Reel-Crew for free for a wide range of purposes such as:

- Register and create an account
- Build a professional profile
- Upload resumes, logos, and web links (e.g. demo reel, IMDB page, etc.)
- List credits
- Regularly update individual profiles around the clock

The Reel-Crew registration customized configuration will be completed next month. Prior to its launch, staff will conduct outreach to industry groups, guilds, unions, and local media outlets, giving the industry ample time to register their listings before the Reel-Crew production directory is added to the website.

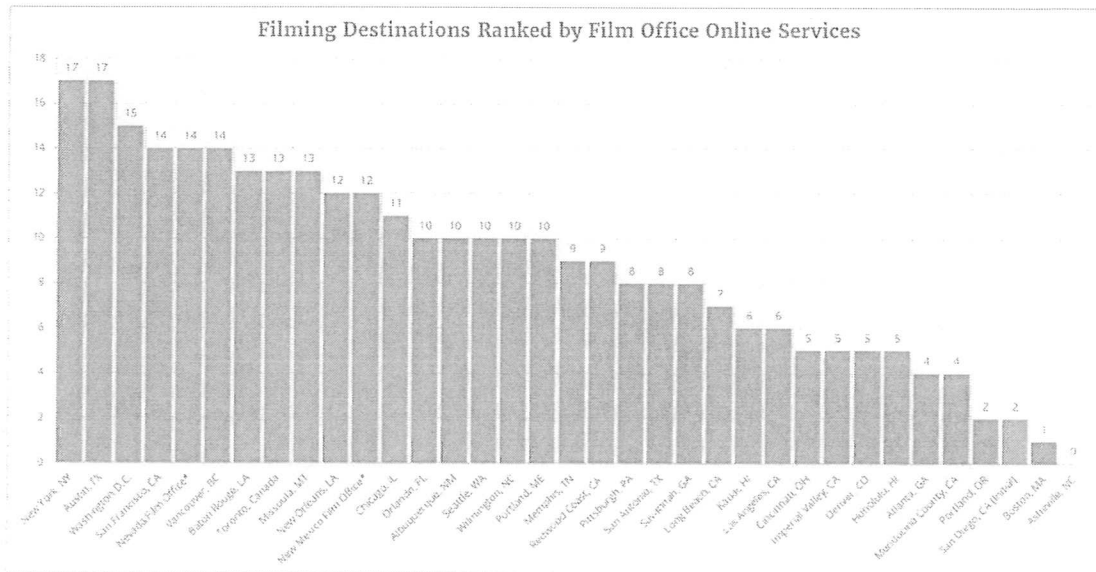
6. Adding Resources and Updating Information on City’s Website

The online competitive analysis of top filming destinations’ has also served as a guide for online best practices, industry standards, and current trends that can be applied towards the development of a more robust, content driven City website.

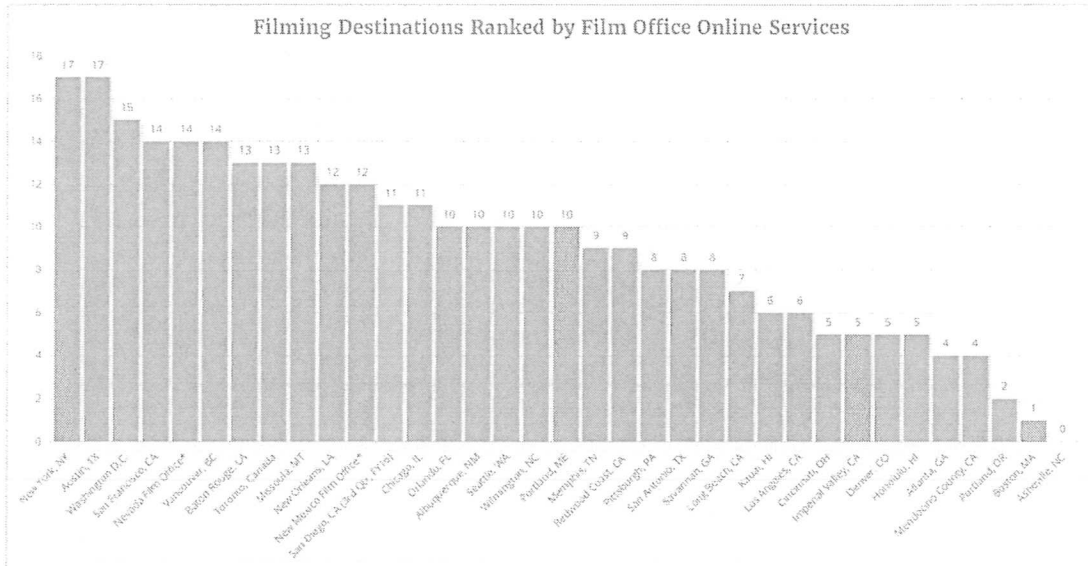
In addition to the launch of the San Diego Reel-Scout Location Gallery, the Filming Program Manager has made initial improvements to the content provided on the City’s website, including:

- Preliminary location services such as a list of popular B-roll locations
- Regional educational resources,
- State and local incentives to attract filming to the region

At the initiation of the online best practices benchmarking study, San Diego was assessed to rank in the bottom third of information available to the film industry as shown below:



On March 14, 2016 when the City's new website was introduced, additional resources were added online. The City now ranks higher in terms of scope of content than most top filming destinations, as seen in the chart below:



While updates to the content and design of the website will be ongoing, and as the San Diego Film Program further develops, it is the goal to be ranked amongst the top three cities in terms of scope of information and resources available to prospective film productions and the local film industry.

7. Development of Advertising Campaign

Advertising in print and online publications is an important strategy in the effort to re-establish San Diego as a leading film destination. There are a number of print and online publications that specifically target the film industry/trade. In order to re-introduce San Diego to the industry, advertising during this fiscal year will take place in the following publications:

1. *Locations International 2016*
2. *Beyond Cinema Magazine*
3. *MovieMaker Magazine*
4. *The Creative Handbook*

The purpose of the advertisements will be to reinforce the message that San Diego is a top film-friendly destination and provide iconic imagery of San Diego's diverse locations throughout the region, including City, County, and Port properties, year-round. Distribution of the four publications is directed to:

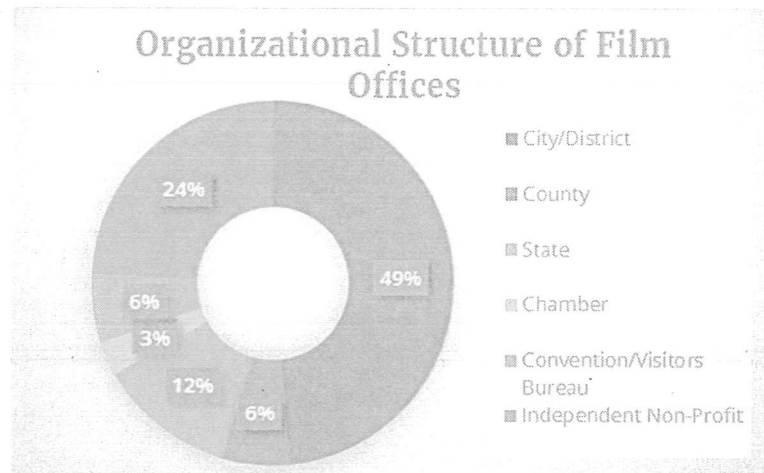
1. Producers, filmmakers, and studio executives
2. Location Managers Guild International members
3. Association of Independent Commercial Producers members
4. Attendees of international festivals and industry events including:
 - Cannes Film Festival
 - Cannes Lions Advertising Festival

- Marché International des Programmes de Communication, English: International Market of Communications Programmes (MIPCOM)
- American Film Market & Conferences
- Berlin Film Festival

8. Benchmarking Organizational Structures

The top filming destinations included in the online benchmarking study also were analyzed to determine their organizational structure. The analysis determined that 67% of film offices are housed within city, county, or state public agencies.

As depicted in the chart below, a majority of top film offices (49%) are structured as a department or division of the destinations' respective City or District; 12% are State operated; and 6% managed by County agencies. Independent Non-profits manage 24% of film offices, followed by Convention/Visitors Bureaus (6%), and Chambers of Commerce (3%).



The findings from the organization benchmarking indicate the industry's evolution from a labor-intensive film office to a web-based digital portal for the promotion of easily accessible location galleries, crew directories, advertising and other support services for the film industry. The organization benchmarking also supports the action by the Mayor and City Council in allocating funds to hire a Filming Program Manager to create a strong internal base that complements the efforts to re-establish San Diego as a leading filming destination.

As part of the re-establishment of San Diego as a top filming destination, in October 2015, the City of San Diego, in conjunction with the County of San Diego, issued a Request for Ideas (RFI) to receive Statements of Ideas (SOI) from film industry representatives for the creation of a dynamic, sustainable film program.

The majority of the SOIs submitted echo the importance of services that have been or are in the process of being implemented including:

- Establishment of a primary point of contact for film authorization and production facilitation
- Implementation of a digital location gallery
- Development of a digital crew directory

- Advertising in industry publications
- Development of a content rich website

Based on the wide range of ideas provided by respondents to the RFI, staff continues to evaluate next steps in the growth of the program. Potential areas for future partnerships and enhancements to the program include outreach to studio and independent production executives, training, location gallery and web content development, as well as emerging areas of interest to the industry such as the use of 3D technology and the development of film tourism.

CONCLUSION

Over the last nine months, San Diego has made significant strides in the development of the San Diego Film Program and re-establishing the region as a leading film destination. The hiring of the Filming Program Manager as a dedicated point of contact and to establish a customer-service oriented, streamlined production process while implementing innovative technologies to benefit all aspects of the film industry has demonstrated San Diego's commitment to being competitive as a top filming destination.

Enhancements to the scope and depth of content to the City's website will further support the local industry and serves as a 24/7 gateway for the industry to engage with all that San Diego has to offer, including regional educational resources, State and local filming incentives, and enhanced location services. With the launch of the San Diego Reel-Scout Location Gallery, the industry now has access to the unparalleled filming locations available in San Diego, with more to be added in the months ahead through extensive community outreach.

In the next 60-90 days, the advertising campaign will officially launch, further reinforcing the message that San Diego is a top film-friendly filming destination. The complete suite of online services designed by Reel-Scout will also be implemented, including the Location Submission Engine and Reel-Crew production directory. Extensive outreach to the local film industry, including guilds, associations, unions, and businesses, will commence to boost free registration on Reel-Crew, ensuring that the directory will aptly showcases the wide range of talented crews and support services located within the region. To increase outreach efforts to the industry, the Filming Program Manager will also participate in upcoming industry tradeshow and events, including the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations & Global Finance Show and the Film Liaisons in California Statewide (FLICS) and California Film Commission's Film in California Conference.

By supporting an innovative, holistic approach, San Diego will be a part of the industry's evolution towards augmenting film office capabilities with online technologies by promoting the breadth of film locations and providing free promotional services to its talented crews and support services, while remaining flexible enough to tap into the strengths of both the public and private sectors as warranted by the changing needs of the industry.

CITY STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVE(S):

Goal #1: Provide high quality public service

Objective #1: Promote a customer-focused culture that prizes accessible, consistent, and predictable delivery of services

Objective #2: Improve external and internal coordination and communication

Objective #4: Ensure equipment and technology are in place so that employees can achieve high quality public service

Goal #3: Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City

Objective #5: Enhance San Diego's global standing

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONTRACTING INFORMATION (if applicable): N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS: No previous Council or Committee Action.

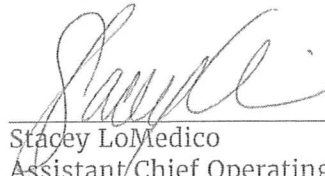
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS: N/A

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

Stakeholders include the film industry, residents and businesses in the San Diego region.



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