

UTAH
FILM COMMISSION

UPDATED FOR 2018

STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 – 2017

“Why Utah Is Poised to Be America’s Next Tech and Creative Hub

College grads, beehive work ethic put Silicon Slopes on the map”

Adweek, July 2016

“The future for entertainment and technology in Utah is very bright. We’re getting noticed for more and more.”

Lt. Governor Spencer Cox

“In order for Utah to compete globally in the film industry, we have to offer more than our scenic, varied landscape by incentivizing quality projects that drive economic development.”

Speaker Greg Hughes, Utah House

“How do you sum up Utah’s advantages? The quality of life, quality of the universities, quality of the talent, and a state with a great business climate. All of these things together align really well.”

Jon Dean
Former Director of EA Salt Lake



Utah Governor's Office of
Economic Development

BUSINESS • TOURISM • FILM

Utah prides itself on maintaining a diverse economy that keeps our state at the top of the list of places to do business. This diversity has also helped industries like film and digital media to thrive, building Utah's reputation as a creative hub with an experienced workforce. That reputation will only grow with the expansion of digital entertainment technology and the cultivation of talent at the state's universities. I am proud of GOED's role in helping strengthen Utah's film infrastructure to attract more business and more dollars to the state.

Val Hale
Executive Director
Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development



Mother Nature played favorites with Utah's landscapes and spectacular scenery. Filmmakers love Utah's outdoor and metropolitan settings, plus experienced crew and affordable resources. Film's contribution to Utah's economy is evident in the jobs created and the money spent locally at restaurants, retail stores and lodging, particularly in rural Utah. But the benefits reach far beyond financials. The film industry builds Utah's brand as a beautiful place for tourists to visit, and as a place that welcomes the creative class. Utah will continue to be at the forefront of the changing film industry and continue to showcase the best Utah has to offer.

Vicki Varela
Managing Director
Utah Office of Tourism, Film and Global Branding

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Innovations in the film and entertainment industries are more exciting than ever before. With virtual reality and augmented reality making waves, and interactive design and digital animation taking a front seat, we look ahead to the future of film with awe and anticipation.

The film and entertainment industry is integral to the creative and cultural fabric of Utah and its growth will help bring filmmakers, content creators, entrepreneurs and artists together. With over 450 film and digital entertainment companies, the Utah Film Commission will help connect these industries and continue economic growth across the state.

As graduates and enrollees in film, game design, animation and other digital media forms increase in Utah higher education, the steps we take now will ensure that the next generation of creative and business talent critical to the continued expansion of this industry is nurtured here in Utah.

There are many opportunities to support our homegrown creative sector to increase job availability for our many graduates and to ensure the accountability of the dollars allocated to the incentive program, all of which will continue to shape Utah's growing reputation in the global entertainment industry.

The future of film is bright in Utah!

Virginia Pearce
Utah Film Commissioner



REMARKABLE PAST

The Utah Film Commission was established in 1974 to support the already rich legacy of filmmaking in Utah. Operating under the umbrella of the Utah Office of Tourism and as part of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, the Utah Film Commission is responsible for marketing the state as a destination for film, TV and commercial production by promoting the use of professional local crew and talent, support services and Utah locations. More than 1,000 films have been produced in the state from John Wayne classics such as Stagecoach and The Searchers and Academy Award winning films like Forrest Gump and Thelma & Louise to television series Touched by an Angel, Everwood and Granite Flats, proving that Utah has an undeniably deep and lasting commitment to the entertainment industry.

Utah's film industry represents 432 film-related businesses and \$97 million in wages & salaries.

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A STRATEGIC FUTURE

Just as the entertainment industry is ever changing and innovating, the Utah Film Commission needs to adapt to showcase everything our state has to offer. It's not about one fund or one project but rather an integrated approach using our economic development team, our homegrown talent, as well as the growing creative community that looks to Utah as a place to do business. Utah's solid film industry foundation is the base from which we will grow as a leader in the production of independent film, television, family entertainment, digital innovation and interactive entertainment.

This strategic plan identifies the areas the Utah Film Commission has prioritized to strengthen the local film and creative industry and help the state to take full advantage of the opportunities for national and international exposure and economic development.

GROW THE INDUSTRY & SUPPORT TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Our college graduates cannot be our industry's biggest export. We must create opportunities and expand connections to promote and provide opportunities for potential and established talent (students, professionals, businesses) within Utah's creative sector.

INSPIRE EMERGING MARKETS

Bring together Utah's digital entertainment community within the existing network of film and creative content producers.

MOTION PICTURE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Assess best practices for Utah's Motion Picture Incentive Program in order to create a more effective and sustainable program that attracts higher quality projects.

ESTABLISH RIGOROUS MEASURES & METRICS

Capture and measure data to understand the benefits the creative industry brings to Utah in terms of a return on opportunity, engagement, objectives, impressions and investment. Data driven policymaking will ensure the return on objectives.

BUILD UTAH: LIFE ELEVATED

Showcase Utah Film Commission's role in promoting Utah as a destination for film and digital entertainment via partnerships, government relations, events, and expertise. This area is crafted to amplify overall tourism and economic objectives active in our state.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Utah Film Commission will be a catalyst in the growth and evolution of the state's film and entertainment industries.

Film and entertainment businesses, jobs and wages have all shown an increase since 2011 and this trend looks likely to continue. Enrollment in degree programs in these areas has doubled over graduate numbers in 2015. In order to continue to thrive as an industry, we have developed a plan to address strategic areas of growth.

2018 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

INDUSTRY GROWTH & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITIES

- There is a large pool of Utah graduates in entertainment industries looking to stay in Utah.
- There is a greater number of productions coming to Utah looking for experienced crew.
- Film & commercial production companies often look to rural Utah for their locations.

APPROACH

- Develop a training and apprenticeship program to introduce newcomers to industry professionals and encourage gender and cultural diversity in the film industry.
- Certify counties around the state in our Film Ready Utah program.

EMERGING MARKETS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Utah universities are nationally ranked in game design and animation, but we are exporting many of our graduates.
- VR and AR market sectors are growing in the U.S. and Utah has resources to offer.

APPROACH

- Cultivate relationships with existing tech industry associations, including Silicon Slopes and Utah Digital Entertainment Network.
- Perform a market assessment and establish a recruitment track for digital entertainment companies.

MOTION PICTURE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

OPPORTUNITIES

- Utah's filmmaking resources and consistent incentive program have opened the door to bigger budget productions.
- The impact of tax dollars spent on the MPIP is felt not only in jobs and dollars but in tourism, education and cultural cultivation.

APPROACH

- Use data to determine a sustainable approach to the growth of the program.
- Ensure a balance between out-of-state and local productions to sustain and grow the industry.
- Work with Office of Tourism to track film impact on tourism and promote Utah's history in film.

MEASURE & METRICS

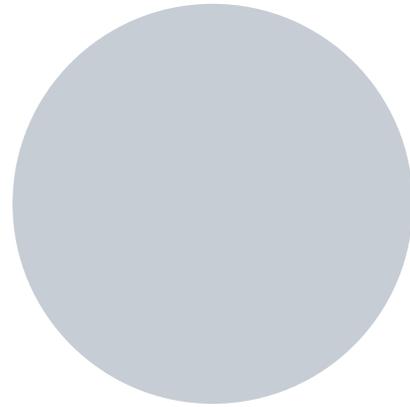
OPPORTUNITIES

- New requirements, personnel and systems make it easier to collect and analyze data.
- Untracked production costs from commercials mean we are undervaluing our program.
- Production companies that bring work to Utah turn into our strongest ambassadors.

APPROACH

- Establish processes to collect more standardized data from statewide permitting agencies.
- Use new data collected to actively inform decision-making processes.
- Survey production companies and crews that come into the state to better understand their needs.

GROW THE INDUSTRY & SUPPORT TALENT DEVELOPMENT



Skill sets associated with film, game design, animation and visual effects cross purposes with those needed by our growing tech and innovation scene. Engage with, motivate and nurture local talent and the next generation of content creators to increase Utah's offering, expand industry cohesiveness and global presence.

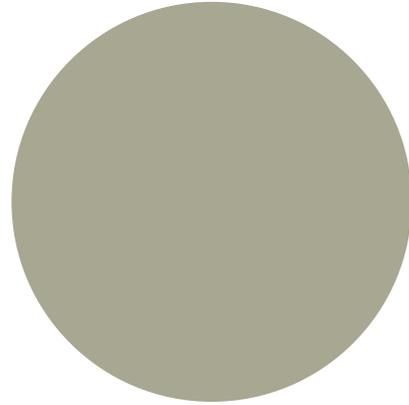
OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing number of talented Utah graduates in film and entertainment industries looking to stay in Utah.
- More jobs available from productions coming to Utah looking for talented "A-List" crew.

APPROACH

- Partner with film and digital entertainment leaders to offer industry exposure, workshops, networking and ultimately, employment opportunities for recent graduates.
- Collaborate with Utah's universities to include career openings for talent within the film and entertainment industries.
- Develop, support and encourage partnerships between businesses and educational institutions.

INSPIRE EMERGING MARKETS



You can no longer talk about the film industry without talking about the new media and technology that comes with it. Today, the vast majority of films rely heavily on digital techniques that take entertainment to new levels of audience interaction.

Here in Utah, major players such as Entertainment Arts (EA) as well as fast-growing local companies including WildWorks and ChAIR Entertainment are creating games and technologies used by companies like Apple, NASA and National Geographic. Our university programs are ranked nationally, including University of Utah's Entertainment Arts & Engineering, which is currently #1 for undergraduates studying game design. We need to nurture and retain local talent in order to continue to grow the state's status as a hub for visual effects, animation and game design in the new world of film and digital entertainment.

Part of our mission is to be a catalyst and connector for innovators in the private sector. We can serve a critical role by providing the leadership and ability to convene stakeholders. We see a lot of economic value in growing the sector of digital entertainment into the multi-billion dollar industry it has the potential to be.

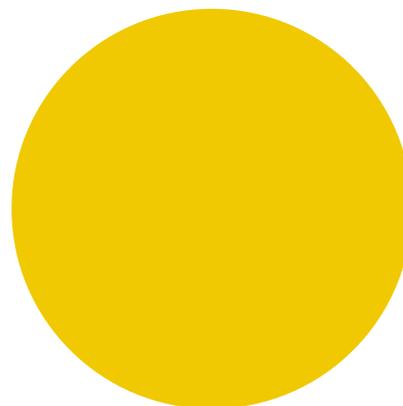
OPPORTUNITIES

- The digital entertainment industry is quickly finding a home in Utah and needs a skilled and talented workforce with a broad spectrum of skills and applications.
- There is a crossover of skills between digital entertainment and tech companies' needs.
- Our game design programs are ranked in the top programs nationally with companies recruiting heavily from our public and private universities.

APPROACH

- Recognize the high-wage and innovation potential impact on Utah's diverse economy and help clear the pipeline for graduates.
- Connect our innovators in the private sector with resources to build their companies in Utah.
- Create opportunity for growing digital entertainment companies to transplant their operations here in the state.

MOTION PICTURE INCENTIVE PROGRAM



Utah's proximity to Hollywood coupled with the ease in which you can transition from wild open spaces to urban centers are just some of the reasons filmmakers flock to the state to make movies. But the film industry is historically and increasingly incentive driven and, even with Utah's great location and resources, competition for film production is stiff and those states that don't offer incentives are rarely able to close the deal.

Along with bringing new economic impact to the state, Utah's Motion Picture Incentive Program also helps to develop a robust local film industry by providing opportunities to work on a national level. Even though it offers some of the nation's smallest incentives, Utah's program remains competitive because of its consistency and long-term predictability. The program's conservative and measured investment approach is unique and can help Utah thrive in building the state's reputation, creating jobs and enhancing tourism.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Utah's inherent resources and consistent program have opened the door to bigger budgets and better quality productions.
- Our unique culture allows us to support family friendly productions.
- Documentaries, new stories about Utah are waiting to be told.
- Our long history with film provides us with rich data to tell a compelling story about the industry's impact.
- Worth referencing Sundance in regards to marketing and relationship building?

APPROACH

- Use data to determine a sustainable approach to the growth of the program.
- Better marketing and outreach efforts to productions that will provide Utah with the most impact for dollars spent.
- Update protocol for approved productions in order to better track how and where money is being spent in the state.
- Transition incentive program to include a point system that rewards productions that meet more stringent criteria.

Utah has its own unique culture and values that are different from anywhere else in the world.

Because of our demographics, Utah is in a prime position to lead in the area of quality, family-friendly content. Our relationship with Disney provides a huge opportunity for developing projects whose target audience lives in Utah.

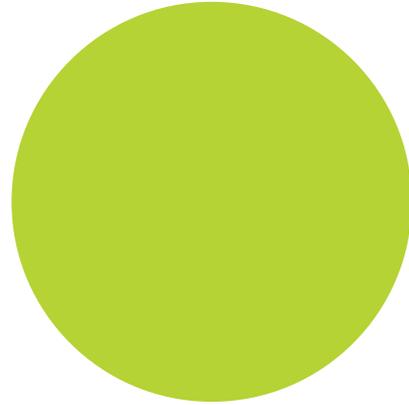
\$6.79 million per year is allotted to the MPIP fund for distribution (pending approval by GOED).

Productions that spend under **\$1,000,000** are eligible for a **20%** tax credit while productions over **\$1,000,000** are eligible for a **25%** tax credit.

CLOSER LOOK AT CURRENT UTAH MOTION PICTURE INCENTIVE PROGRAM:

- Per statute, the key objectives of the incentive program are to encourage the use of Utah locations, crew and resources, to provide incentives in order to compete with other states and to develop a strong motion picture industry presence in the state.
- Incentives are only offered to productions that meet rigorous criteria including quality, potential reach, suitability for broad audiences, filming location and potential economic impact.
- The MPIP is a post-performance credit, meaning that productions must show through a CPA audit that they have actually spent what they estimated.
- Unlike many other states and countries, Utah only gives incentives on dollars left in state. Out of state cast & crew salaries don't count, nor do purchases made out of state.

ESTABLISH RIGOROUS MEASURES & METRICS



It is critical that the Utah Film Commission, as a state agency, measures its progress in fulfilling its mission and its success in mobilizing resources. By putting systems in place to accurately track metrics on both the incentive program, as well as the film and entertainment industries as a whole, we can more clearly understand and communicate our successes and challenges.

The Film Commission has engaged the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute in an overall industry analysis, set to be completed by fall of 2016, that will help focus our planning in a way that has not been possible before. Data gathered as part of that baseline assessment of the industry will result in a simple framework for measuring performance in areas such as:

- Education
- Utah's competitive advantages
- Utah's entertainment industry workforce
- Industry trends
- Economic sectors
- Incentives ROI

By quantifying the return on image, we can ensure film and digital entertainment serves as a billboard for Utah's iconic and beautiful landscape, and builds the reputation for innovation within the industry.

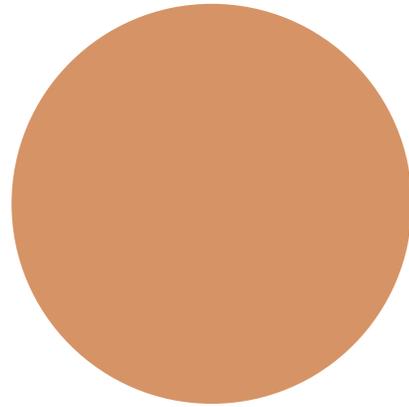
OPPORTUNITIES

- Newly updated statute definitions, administrative rule and policies make it an ideal time to create a more rigorous data collection system.
- Investment from industry trade organizations will help quantify the intangible aspects of the industry and their impacts on the state.
- Build a baseline and systems that will be invaluable to future planning and investing.

APPROACH

- Distribute annual survey to content creators to better identify the Utah creative workforce.
- Capture data on all projects to measure the depth and breadth of the film and creative industry and its impact
- Evaluate the foundation of the digital entertainment sector in Utah and how it compares to other states.
- Explore ways to quantify the impact of known talent that have worked in Utah and share their experience on national and international levels.

BUILD UTAH: LIFE ELEVATED



The benefits of film production reach far beyond financial. Seeing Utah on the big screen builds our brand as a tourist destination and as a place that welcomes the creative class. The Utah Film Commission plays a pivotal role in showcasing all that Utah has to offer around the state

Building capacity in rural communities will help grow their economic sectors and provide better resources for incoming productions. Our new program Film Ready Utah outfits community leaders with the tools needed to encourage production in their areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The vast history of film in Utah provides rich material to tell our story to the people of Utah, filmmakers and visiting tourists.
- The impact of the film and entertainment industry in Utah has been undervalued and now is the time to talk about the Film Commission's role.
- With film production at a high, there is an opportunity to educate policy makers about the historical relevance and future goals of the Film Commission.

APPROACH

- Showcase Utah Film Commission activities and efforts through regular reports and communications to legislators and other state leaders.
- Highlight unique stories about film and digital entertainment projects in regular newsletter and media.
- Host events, tours and conferences that give a behind-the-scenes glimpse of projects that are happening in Utah.
- Strengthen partnerships with organizations and companies that share the vision of the Utah film and digital entertainment industry.

ONE FILM'S IMPACT IN UTAH

TOTAL UTAH SPEND: \$4,093,387



Film Rental and
Leasing Services
\$529,696



Acommodations
\$1,585,869



Wages and Benefits
\$1,310,209



Restaurant/Meals
\$131,299



Retail
\$271,538



Transportation Related
Activities
\$111,649

UTAH
FILM COMMISSION

“Building industries is key to having a vibrant and strong economy. The film and digital media sectors provide excellent opportunities to bring new money into the state.”

Sen. John Smith

“We applaud Utah Film Commission’s vision across the entire scope of the industry from developing new local talent, to seeking new voices, encouraging expertise with new technologies and keeping Utah’s incentives program competitive. These all add up to a thriving cultural and economic landscape in Utah.”

Sarah Pearce
Managing Director, Sundance Institute

“Our new production of ‘Andi Mack’ will have the benefit of our years of collaboration with the Utah Film Commission and the wellspring of creative talent and locations the state offers.”

Susette Hsiung
Executive Vice President, Network Production Management
and Operations, Disney Channels Worldwide



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