

# Los Angeles Times

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### New Mexico kicks in \$10 million for new Santa Fe film and TV studio

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New Mexico is determined to stay in the Hollywood limelight.

Much to the chagrin of California, New Mexico has emerged as a major draw for movies and TV shows in recent years. Credit a generous 25% film production rebate, favorable climate and an aggressive film office.

Now, the state that bills itself as "Hollywood's Newest Home," is ratcheting up the competition even further. With the support of a \$10-million economic development grant from the state, developers are about to break ground on a major production studio just outside of Santa Fe, the state's capital.

The \$25-million project, called Santa Fe Studios, will include two 18,000-square-foot sound stages and 27,000 square feet of warehouse space. It is expected to open by next fall. It will be the state's second major sound stage facility, joining the larger Albuquerque Studios, which has eight sound stages and has helped fuel the state's film growth since it opened in 2007. The studio is home to the TV series "Breaking Bad," the cable channel ReelzChannel (which relocated from Los Angeles last year) and has hosted such movies as "Terminator Salvation" and "Book of Eli."

"We feel positively about the future of the film business here," said Jason Hool, president of Santa Fe Studios, which is owned by Hool's family. "There is plenty of film work to go around."

New Mexico drew \$267.9 million in direct film spending in the fiscal year that ended June 30, about flat from the same time last year but up from \$150.8 million in fiscal 2007, according to the New Mexico Film Office.

The new sound stages will draw more business to the state, local film promoters predict.

"We have the opportunity to get the stage work that doubles or triples the amount of time that a production is working within our state," said Lisa Strout, director of the New Mexico Film Office. "That will keep New Mexico film crews working that much longer."

What it means for Los Angeles film crews is another matter.

-- Richard Verrier

*Photo: An artist's rendering of Santa Fe Studios. Photo credit: Bastien & Associates Inc.*