

## **Empire State Development News**

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## **TAKING WOODSTOCK BRINGS \$8 MILLION INTO CAPITAL REGION**

### **New York State landed Oscar-winning director Ang Lee's new movie with enhanced tax credits**

*Taking Woodstock* was one of the first films to take advantage of the enhanced incentives

Focus Features' *Taking Woodstock*, the new movie from Oscar-winning director Ang Lee, filmed on location in New York State's Columbia and Rensselaer Counties earlier this year. The film was one of the first to take advantage of the enhanced incentives and tax credits that the state now offers; Governor David A. Paterson and the New York State Legislature agreed to raise the New York State Film Production Credit to 30% of qualified costs, three times larger than the credit it replaces. As a result, the production *Taking Woodstock* generated an estimated \$8 million to boost the local economy and spent nearly \$25 million throughout New York State.

The majority of the 42-day shoot took place in the town of New Lebanon, in Columbia County. Prior to the tripling of the state's tax incentive, the filmmakers were considering locations outside New York – even though the 1969-set true story is set in the State; *Taking Woodstock* is about a man, Elliot Tiber (played in the film by Demetri Martin), who inadvertently played a pivotal role in making the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival into the famed happening it was. *Taking Woodstock* will be released by Focus in August 2009.

With more than 250 feature films shot here every year and over 100,000 New Yorkers employed by the industry, film and television production is vital to the State's economy. With increased competition from neighboring states, New York State was hard hit in 2007. The enhanced tax credit incentive has helped New York State once again reclaim its spot as the premiere location for film production.

Unlike some states, New York's credit is fully refundable, meaning that if a production does not owe any state taxes, the credit earned will be treated as a refund. Another significant improvement this year is that the new program makes any refund 100% payable with the tax return filed for the year the project is completed; previously, a production had to file over two tax years to receive the entire refund. Further, within the five boroughs of New York City, the New York State 30% film credit can be combined with the 5% Made In New York City tax credit – for a total credit of 35% on qualified costs.

"We were thrilled when we heard that *Taking Woodstock* decided to film in New York," said Pat Kaufman, Executive Director of the New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development. "Competition for film business is fierce, and we've seen other states trying to draw our business away with an array of aggressive programs. But our enhanced tax credit has attracted over 90 film and television projects since it was increased in April, and is projected to generate \$1.4 billion of spending in New York State."

"*Taking Woodstock* is a New York story, but without the enhanced tax credit incentive we never could've filmed in New York," added the film's executive producer Celia Costas. "We were so thrilled when we heard about the tripling of the tax incentive. Columbia County was the perfect location, and the community was fantastic. Rarely have any of us had a better location filming experience. The people from the town of New Lebanon, and throughout Columbia and Rensselaer Counties, were warm and welcoming and became terrific partners in the experience of making this film."

The New York State Film Production Credit is administered by the New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, an agency of Empire State Development. For more information on eligibility, requirements check out [www.nylovesfilm.com](http://www.nylovesfilm.com).

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